

East and West:
new thinking,
old thinking

PAGE 2

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Silent Summer

Why birds
in America
stopped singing
in 1986

James A. Baker III

The new prime minister

PAGE 7

Cyberpunk rules

Fiction's new frontier

PAGE 18

Kate Millpointer reports

page 12

Miles DeCoster

Now it's time for the West to do its own 'new thinking'

By Diana Johnstone

Nearly two years ago, Mikhail Gorbachov raised the question of whether "the political mentality will adapt to the demands of our times or whether civilization and life itself on Earth will be wiped out." Gorbachov introduced the theme of "new thinking" as a universal necessity for the very survival of humankind. The need was not for just the Soviets or the Americans to change their thinking, but for both—for everybody—to overcome mental habits that get in the way of understanding a rapidly changing world. New thinking involves "respect for others, along with objective, self-critical evaluation of one's own society; this is cruelly lacking in current international affairs," Gorbachov observed.

Looking the other way: The West has reacted as if the only need for "new thinking" was in the East. The debate in the West tends to center on whether or not we perfect creatures in our perfect world should take Gorbachov's efforts to improve seriously. The notion that perhaps we should move to meet the other system's self-criticism with efforts of our own is seldom voiced, and never at a level approaching national leadership. Yet mass starvation, looming ecological collapse and the human ruin of drug addiction should be enough to show that American hegemony over the "Free World" has not been an unmitigated success. Who is going to do the thinking in America, old or new? When it comes to public policy, thinking has been turned over to the "think tanks," which produce "executive summaries" on major issues for decision-makers too busy to study the background.

A recent example of what they are thinking is an October report to Defense Secretary Frank Carlucci by the Defense Science Board—which calls itself "an influential advisory group whose members come from industry and academia"—urging the Pentagon to exert more direct influence on tax, trade, environmental and education policies. The Defense Science Board, backed by fellow tank thinkers in the Air Force Association, the National Defense University and other similar advisory bodies, are worried that the Pentagon is not defending itself adequately from conflicting demands of civilian lobbies. They advocate increased Pentagon control of the American economy, by way of a new "Industrial Policy Council," in order to head off "an increasing loss of technological leadership" to both "allies and adversaries."

With its usual moderate optimism, the *New York Times*

suggested that "widely held aversion to political control of the economy" might stand in the way of this "new thinking on the military-industrial complex." So American "new thinking" is a reduction to the absurd of the old. The Pentagon was supposed to defend the American economic system, but since economic policies "affect national security," they must be remodeled to defend the Pentagon.

This is the ultimate consequence of the military Keynesianism articulated as American policy in Paul Nitze's historically influential April 1950 National Security Memorandum NSC-68. The basis of NSC-68's thinking was the fact that it took World War II, with its huge throw-away war production, to bring the U.S. out of the Great Depression. "One of the most significant lessons of our World War II experience," read NSC-68, "was that the American economy, when it operates at a level approaching full efficiency, can provide enormous resources for purposes other than civilian consumption while simultaneously providing a higher standard of living." This recipe for guns and butter has dominated U.S. policy ever since.

The ties that bind: The thinking is even older than NSC-68. Military Keynesianism was the major lasting invention of the German National Socialist Workers Party, the Nazis for short. Largely because of reparations payments to World War I victors, Germany was hardest hit by the Depression following the 1929 crash. Only the Nazis advocated deficit spending to finance a military buildup. This is why Hitler was supported by German industrialists, even though they found the Nazis uncouth and their anti-Semitism irrational. The Nazi economic policy worked. But it entailed a war against "Bolshevism" that ruined Germany.

Soviet analysts, who have always tended to see economic factors as the sole determining factors, feared in 1950 that the U.S. was taking over the entire policy package of "German imperialism," with an anti-Bolshevik "rollback" in Eastern Europe as the logical end. Cold War ideology was based on symmetrical reductionist analyses. The Soviet Union and the U.S. each identified the other with Nazi Germany. In the Americans' view, the Soviet Union, like Nazi Germany, was "totalitarian." In the Russians' view, the U.S., like Nazi Germany, was "imperialist." Both labels left out a lot of contradictory factors and fostered enemy stereotypes.

Western Cold War thinking extends via the Pentagon to the European NATO establishment. An example of its thinking is provided by a recent report on "The Gorbachov Challenge and European Security" issued by the European Strategy Group (ESG), set up in 1985 by analysts and think tanks belonging to the pro-Atlantic Alliance mainstream.

The ESG writes as if the West were ruled by pacifists. The report states, "Unlike in Western liberal and democratic society, military power has been regarded by successive Soviet leaderships not as a 'necessary evil' or 'blemish' but as a useful and morally ('historically') justified instrument." Apparently unaware of any contradiction, the ESG goes on to observe: "A final constant feature of Soviet foreign policy has been the objective of preventing war." Typically, the ESG proceeds on the assumption that only the Soviet Union needs "new thinking." It complains that Soviet analysts continue to use terms Western ideologues dislike. "All the main 'antagonisms' are still considered to be operative: social, intra-state, inter-state, transnational, those between the 'three power centers of imperialism' [the U.S., Western Europe and Japan] and between socialism and capitalism. Finally, 'imperialism'...continues to be regarded as inherently 'aggressive' and to be the chief source of war."

Apparently, Soviet "new thinking," to be new, should be a reversal or denial of traditional Soviet analysis of international antagonisms and sources of war. Yet this is scarcely necessary, in terms of Gorbachov's premise that what makes new thinking necessary is a new historical

situation. The new situation is characterized by dangers to the survival of humanity itself that transcend all the antagonisms, whether or not they subsist...as they obviously do.

The real enemies? Every day the Western press is full of articles and editorials about incipient trade wars between the U.S., Western Europe and Japan. There is currently much speculation in the West about the shifting formation of vast economic regions: a Pacific region dominated by Japan, a Western Hemisphere dominated as ever by the U.S., and a Western European zone including Africa. Why such indignation when Soviet commentators also dare refer to the "three power centers of imperialism"?

A century ago Western imperialists used the term proudly, without cloaking it in quotation marks. Since Lenin used it against them, the word has become taboo. Sacrificing a concept does not change reality, but may make it harder to interpret. Banning the concept of imperialism, has the West developed a better explanation for the 1914 war? In the absence of that concept, explanations have swung from the official nationalist propaganda of wartime states—"to make the world safe for democracy," and so on—to the well-meaning conclusion that it was all a terrible accident. This explanation has its part of truth. But it overlooks another part. The stage was set for that terrible accident by the imperialist expansion of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Revulsion against the 1914-18 war, which truly ruined Europe—although the ruin was not completed until World War II in 1939-45—was the main reason so many Europeans turned to the Leninist parties of the Third International. The critique of imperialist wars is the undeniable part of truth in the international communist movement, whatever other errors and crimes may have been committed in the name of Communism.

There was a great hope contained in the diagnosis of

INSIDE STORY

imperialism as the cause of war. It suggested a cure. Unfortunately, things no longer seem so simple. Conflicts, even wars, between states run by Communist Parties have proved that the cure is still far away and much more complicated than the diagnosis had suggested. And meanwhile, ecological disaster is threatening to make the planet unlivable even if it isn't destroyed by nuclear war.

In a recent interview in *Der Spiegel*, Gorbachov observed, "However different we may be, we are still parts of the same civilization, perhaps the only civilization in the universe. However contradictory and complicated this world organism may be, everything is bound together by a common fate. The differences cannot be grounds for military confrontation, but should be understood as the condition and motive for exchange, competition and compromise."

While Soviet leaders seek common grounds, there is more and more talk within the capitalist world itself of "economic war" between Japan, the U.S. and Western Europe. Economic war is precisely what preceded the shooting wars in 1914 and 1939. The Cold War Soviet Communist analysis was that imperialism, the most advanced stage of capitalism, by its expansionist nature leads to war. The "Free World" capitalist analysis was that Soviet Communism, by its totalitarian nature, is inherently expansionist and leads to war.

Of the two, the Soviet analysis was not the farthest from reality. By abandoning its reductionist version, Soviet leaders abandon the dangerous part, which was a fatalistic acceptance of war. Whether economic determinism or conscious thought decide between war and peace is up to everybody. The next step must be more "new thinking" in the West.

This essay adapts remarks and reflections made at the Institute for Media Analysis conference on anti-communism held at Harvard University November 11-13.

CONTENTS

Inside Story: The need for "new thinking" in the West	2
Chrysler's unimerry Christmas present for Kenosha	3
In Short	4
More bad news than good—black electoral politics	6
Meet America's prime minister, James A. Baker III	7
New York—how the war on drugs hurts the war on AIDS	8
New round of violence in Northern Ireland	9
New policy may doom the "Switzerland of Central America"	11
The silent summer	12
Editorial	14
Letters/Sylvia	15
Viewpoint: The untold history of the Vietnam War	16
Ashes & Diamonds by Alexander Cockburn	17
In Print: Cyberpunk rocks the science fiction universe	18
A semipermeable membrane between art and rock	19
In the Arts: U2 takes fame to a higher plane	20
Space races and death by consumption	21
Classifieds/Life in Hell	23
Beating the streets in <i>Salaam Bombay!</i>	24

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By W.P. Norton

KENOSHA, WIS.

THICK IN THE AIR OUTSIDE FREDDY'S BAR ON Highway 158 is that stinging industrial smell common to company towns. Inside, the bar is decorated with all the usual paraphernalia of working-class taverns: ceremonial swords and rifles on the walls, illustrations of muskie and wall-eye pike on the mirrors. Also hanging on display is a T-shirt that expresses many patrons' sentiments about the Chrysler Corporation's imminent pullout from its auto plant here: "Iec Iacocca says we're #"—and instead of the numeral one is an extended middle finger.

The bartender, Fran, has been serving beer and food at Freddy's for more than 19 years, she tells a visitor. She speaks of the auto plant's scheduled December 19 closing, when Chrysler shuts its doors to all but 1,000 of the 6,500 men and women who work there now. "I don't know what all them people are gonna do," she says between puffs of a Marlboro Light. "There's gonna be a lot of depression around here."

Plant gate 15 faces the bar, and a handful of workers begin to straggle over at about 2:30 a.m., when the first shift gets off. The talk inside is mostly centered on one subject—what will happen after the plant shuts down.

Kenosha boasts the oldest auto-manufacturing plant in the U.S. Cars first rolled off the lines at the Nash Motors plant in 1903. By 1954, when the American Motors Corporation (AMC) was created out of a series of mergers, the auto plant had become an economic magnet. The popular Rambler model was made there, as well as the Jeep. But when AMC threatened a shutdown in 1987, it was feared the plant's 6,500 employees would lose their jobs. Then the Chrysler Corporation bought AMC and promised to keep the plant at full strength through 1992. But in January 1988—just months after its initial promise—Chrysler announced that it was prepared to pull out of most of its Kenosha facilities by September. A negotiated agreement later delayed the pullout until December 19.

The end of a story: Robert Petsin is 53 years old. He mechanically recites the date he was hired at the American Motors auto plant here—Oct. 10, 1960. He still wears a small red-white-and-blue AMC patch on the left shoulder of his beat-up denim jacket. It is a remnant of the good years.

Situated about an hour's drive either way to Chicago or Milwaukee, Kenosha was well-suited to the production and transportation requirements of industry, and businesses catering to the needs of the company sprang up around the city's edge. The oft-repeated story of American life during the postwar boom years was acted out again and again in this company town: high school graduation, maybe a hitch in the military and then a job at the plant, where the pay was good; you could raise a family.

Like many who come to Freddy's, Robert Petsin has lived that story for most of his life. He married, raised three children, put two of them through college, made the mortgage and car payments. In many ways, he is a typical figure in this slice of Americana: union man, Republican during the Reagan era's glory days in the early '80s, drinker of Old Style beer.



Autoworkers express their anger at a Chrysler-government settlement to close the Kenosha plant.

Fear and loathing on the Chrysler assembly line

He will quit work in two years and draw more than \$300 a week for the rest of his life, in addition to health benefits and insurance. He is among the lucky ones who, by virtue of age and seniority, will not be forced into the unemployment line or a job at the local fast-food franchise come December 19. Still he is angry, and he is not alone.

"There's a lot of bitter people here," he says. "It's gonna have a very devastating effect on the city of Kenosha, which is hanging by the skin of its teeth anyway."

Petsin blasts city and county officials and Gov. Tommy G. Thompson for refusing to press a lawsuit against Chrysler this past September. The unprecedented suit would have sought to keep the corporation from closing the plant.

Compromise or sellout?: Thompson originally said he would support the suit. But he changed his mind after the local city council and county board voted on September 23 not to press the suit. The next day Thompson called United Auto Workers (UAW) Local 72 President Ed Steagall and told him the state would follow the suggestion of local government and accept a \$250 million settlement instead of suing. Chrysler also agreed to stay in town until year's end instead of closing in September. In Detroit, the corporation issued a statement in which Chrysler Chairman Iacocca termed the settlement "very expensive" but nonetheless "fair."

Steagall described the settlement as misleading, since the \$250 million included \$60 million in costs already incurred by the company to extend production through the end of the year. He estimated it would bring in only about \$6 million to \$10 million in new money. Under the settlement about 1,000 workers will go on producing L-Body Omni and Horizon model Dodges for up to five years; health, life insurance and unemployment benefits will continue for two years; and the automaker will donate \$1 million to the United Way charity. Chrysler is also

slated to contribute \$1.5 million to the Kenosha Area Development Corporation—as well as six acres of land to the municipal golf course.

"You can't blame us people for being bitter at Iacocca," Petsin, an inspector, says. "This city could have expanded. We're gonna be left out in no man's land with the rest of the world passing us by. I feel sorry for the younger generation that has devoted 10 or 20 years of their lives to this town. What the hell are they gonna do? A lot of people are gonna either have to take welfare or move on. I'm bitter but mostly for the people who are gonna suffer. I'll survive."

"I ain't really that bitter," interjects Robert Cary. "I feel bad for the other guys who got families. I can make it one way or the other." After ordering another Bloody Mary, Cary lights a cigarette and half-jokingly alludes to men who have demonstrated a more severe degree of ill-feeling toward the company through that occasional practice of embittered and alienated employees: wrecking.

"There are actually some guys out there sabotaging the cars. I seen it happen. I seen people screw up cars just for the hell of it."

Chrysler will lay off 5,500 workers at its Kenosha, Wis., plant on December 19. "I don't know what all them people are gonna do," says a local bartender. Economists aren't sure either—but most of their projections are grim.

A lot of superiors are gonna retire so they just got the attitude that they gonna look the other way."

Others dispute Cary's report. But even if it is apocryphal, there is a clear sense of an underlying resentment and, sometimes, outright antagonism toward the company. It is an "attitude problem" that is understandable, given the manner in which the company summarily informed its employees this January that they were no longer needed, that lifetimes of loyal association were of no further value, that the bottom line suddenly meant more.

"I line up the front ends," says Cary, 32. "I started when I was 18.... I know the next job I get ain't gonna pay me no 15 bucks an hour. And I ain't gonna take no minimum-wage job, neither. You sit out there and try to work for five bucks and hour and you gonna have problems. I know one thing for sure: I'm using up every bit of my unemployment. Start worrying about the future later. But them people with \$500-a-month house payments and kids in college, they gonna feel it quick."

Cary orders another round of drinks and gathers his lunch bucket, ready to walk across the street and start the second shift. "Don't print that stuff about people stopping off at taverns before they go to work," he laughs. "That's common knowledge around here anyway."

The pullout's price: What isn't commonly known or even agreed on is the precise scope of the damage the pullout will cause to the local economy. But there are some estimates, most of them grim. According to a union-commissioned report issued this spring by the Chicago-based Midwest Center for Labor Research, the settlement package will do little to offset the disastrous social and economic costs Kenosha will pay long after the plant shuts down. The report says that for each Chrysler worker who loses a job, an additional 1.78 workers in associated jobs will eventually be let go. Considering that 5,500 Chrysler workers face layoffs next month, that projection is grim. The "ripple effect" will dislocate almost 10,000 workers, the study says.

Moreover, the closing will cost government \$209 million—or \$38,000 for each unemployed Chrysler worker—in welfare and unemployment benefits, along with lost taxes, for the first two years after the shutdown. Government revenues will decline by \$125.3 million over the two-year period, while spending on "safety-net" programs such as welfare, child and spouse abuse counseling services, and drug and alcohol addiction treatment will increase by at least \$83.8 million, according to the report.

"It's a disgrace," says Rudy Kuzel, chairman of the local bargaining committee. "There are going to be a lot of social costs to the closing that you cannot put a dollar figure on." Of course, dollar figures are exactly what Chrysler had in mind when it decided to transfer most of its Kenosha production facilities to the city of Detroit. Government officials there are giving a hefty \$189.7 million package of public funds for purposes of refurbishing the corporation's Jefferson Street operations, according to Roger Bybee, editor of a labor newspaper in nearby Racine.

For Kenosha, the pullout will mean a tough adjustment at all levels. New economic development for the area, including a lakefront

Continued on page 10

IN THESE TIMES NOV. 23-DEC. 6, 1988 3

INSHORT

By Joel Bleifuss

The day after

The best preview of what we're in store for in the next four years came from the mouth of the president-elect himself at a post-election press conference. This former director of the CIA—pre-empting charges from critics that he will rely on agency friends to help him manage the world—told how he plans “to keep in touch” with the American people:

Reporter: Mr. Vice President, how are you going to communicate with the American people?

Bush: Reach out and touch someone, use the telephone. And I'm not going to change in terms of my belief that the more personal contact you have the better. I recognize the parameters of this job are quite different, but I will continue to do what I've done in terms of contact. And I am one who works with—closely with—the people that I've, you know, associated with on my staff. It's not just one person I talk to. I will continue, just by way of example, what I've been doing as vice president and in terms of being briefed directly by the Central Intelligence Agency every single day. It's a little bit of a departure but that's the way I'm going to do it, and it puts me in contact with the experts. But I'll try to keep in touch as best I can.”

And they call it democracy

Three out-of-state utility companies poured in big money to defeat a grass-roots referendum on radioactive waste that was one the ballot in Nebraska in this election. Dick Russell reports that initiative 402 would have pulled Nebraska out of a five-state regional association, in which Nebraska has been chosen to receive, for the next 30 years, the “low-level” wastes from the region's seven nuclear reactors (see *In These Times* Aug. 31). But utilities operating nuclear plants in Arkansas and Louisiana, two of the states in the Central States Compact, spent \$1.5 million to defeat the measure, using a last-minute onslaught of deceptive TV ads and direct-mail campaigns. The initiative lost by a two to one margin, after leading in a poll taken only 10 days before the vote. U.S. Ecology Inc.—recently acquired by Browning-Ferris Industries (BFI), the world's second largest waste-disposal conglomerate and a leading environmental felon—now has the go-ahead to build a nuclear waste dump in Nebraska.

Speaking of trash

William Ruckelshaus, former director of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), has been chosen as the new chief executive officer and board chairman of BFI. As Will Collette points out in the bulletin of the Citizen's Clearinghouse for Hazardous Waste of Arlington, Va., “Last year, Neiman Marcus came out with a new line of designer garbage bags. This year, BFI continues the trend toward wrapping nasty garbage in pretty packages by picking Ruckelshaus as its new CEO. Some will recall President Reagan brought Ruckelshaus in to head EPA after it was rocked with scandals during the first three years of the administration. There was little noticeable change in EPA conduct, but things seemed better. This seems to be BFI's motive for [choosing Ruckelshaus].” And the company certainly could do with a new facade. BFI has been fined a record \$2.5 million for more than 1,700 violations at its hazardous-waste dump in Livingston, La. Then there were fines of \$700,000 after BFI and “competitor” Waste Management Inc.—the world's largest waste disposal firm—pled guilty to a price-fixing conspiracy in Ohio. Most recently in Birmingham, Ala., BFI had to pay \$15,000 for dumping spoiled ice cream down a storm drain in front of the state's environmental protection office.

Schools for scoundrels

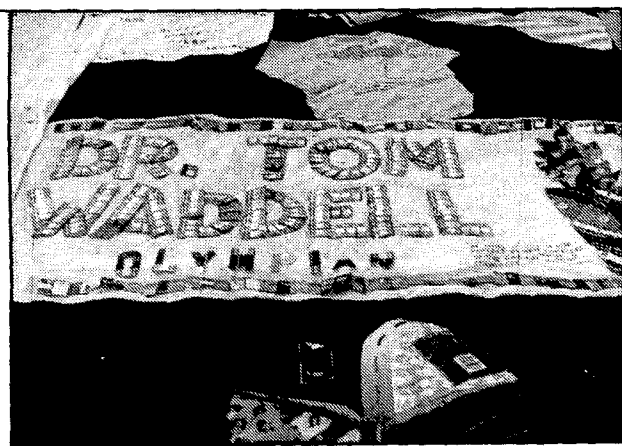
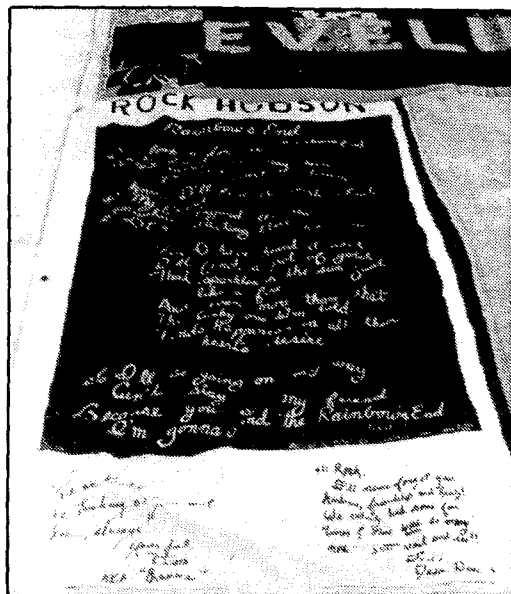
Once Ruckelshaus tires of the corporate world, he might want to try the noble life of an academic at Tufts University. Tufts will soon be offering a degree in hazardous-waste management. Explains Professor Gene Blake, associate director of the Center for Environmental Management: “We've received a lot of support from industry because there's no other program like this in the country right now.”

Unwanted evidence

On August 30 U.S. Customs Service agents raided Trade for Peace Inc., the Madison, Wisconsin-based company that has openly defied the U.S. embargo on trade with Nicaragua. Customs agents



M.J. Murphy



Rex Wodner

An estimated 200,000 people saw the AIDS quilt when it was displayed last month in Washington, D.C. Two who did not were Ronald and Nancy Reagan. If they had bothered to cross the street, the Reagans would have seen more than 10,000 commemorative pieces of the quilt, including memorials to Rock Hudson; Olympian Tom Waddell; and Gaetan Dugas, otherwise known as “Patient Zero,” one of the first people to contract AIDS.

Time to put the AIDS quilt to bed?

The growing popularity of the “AIDS quilt” may be endangering its future. With more than 10,000 commemorative panels already pieced, the 16-ton quilt now requires a tremendous effort to transport and store. At its exhibit last month in Washington, D.C., some 2,000 volunteers were needed to fold, unfold and care for the quilt. Meanwhile new panels pour in to the San Francisco headquarters of the Names Project—the group behind the quilt. Given that 20,000 people are expected to die from AIDS over the next 15 months, and that 30,000 past deaths are not yet commemorated, logistical problems are imminent.

Sue Baelen, Names Project spokeswoman, says finding a permanent home for the quilt has become a pressing issue. With a current span of more than eight football fields, there is little hope to display the quilt in its entirety. Rather, Baelen says, organizers want to find a place with storage space that would allow

panels to be displayed on a rotating basis. Whether that space would be rented or bought has yet to be determined. “First we have to evaluate our own needs,” Baelen says. “Then we have to start fund raising.”

It is this fund-raising aspect, as well as the use of limited human resources, that has sparked criticism over the otherwise non-controversial quilt. Concerned with the lack of funding for AIDS research and the poverty suffered by many people living with AIDS, some people question the value of channeling effort into the Names Project. Others express impatience with the non-political agenda of the group, which declines to issue policy statements or align itself along party lines.

Steve Abbott, a writer for the *San Francisco Sentinel*, a gay news-weekly, is concerned that the quilt is now being “sentimentalized,” “politicized,” and “commodified.” Abbott told *In These Times* he is concerned that the mainstream media has seized on the quilt as a symbol of the AIDS epidemic, and thus, the gay population. In fact, he notes, the quilt has become so identified as a chronicle of the impact of AIDS that

the Smithsonian Institution recently announced it would select several panels for its permanent collection.

Abbott is not particularly pleased with the positive response the quilt has evoked. He accuses the general public of trying to assuage its guilt over AIDS by focusing on the quilt. “One reason the quilt can be so readily embraced by the media is because it can also be read as a memorial to a dying subculture,” he says. “They like the quilt because it gives a pretty picture; they like to see gay people in a sewing circle.”

Baelen agrees that media coverage has been better than expected, with articles printed as far away as Turkey and Japan. She also thinks it is the quilt's “non-threatening” approach that has garnered the attention. But unlike Abbott, she sees that celebrity as an asset. “In addition to raising money, we wanted to show the humanity behind the AIDS statistics and to provide an outlet for grief. The value of the quilt is the broad appeal it carries. We figure over 200,000 people saw it in Washington.”

According to Baelen, panels are still coming to the workshop at the

rate of 20 per week. And more cities have asked to be included in the quilt's next tour, tentatively scheduled for January to July 1989. In addition, selected panels will be displayed at the United Nations on De-

Southern African counterrevolutions awash in elephant blood

Recent congressional testimony has implicated the South African military in an arms-for-ivory smuggling operation that included Angolan rebel leader Jonas Savimbi, the Mozambican rebel group RENAMO and corrupt Zambian officials. Craig Van Note, vice president of Monitor, a coalition of environmental organizations, recently told a Merchant Marine Fisheries subcommittee that "a massive smuggling ring has been operating for years, with the complicity of high-level South African government and military officials to funnel ivory and other contraband out of Africa."

With raw ivory selling at a record \$80 a pound, the African elephant, the world's largest land mammal, is now an endangered species. These magnificent beasts that once roamed most of the African continent live in highly social matriarchal societies. The defense and care of young is shared by extended family units. Today only a remnant of a once vast population survives.

Van Note provided Congress with details of the three major supply lines used by the smugglers. First, "South African four-wheel-drive

vehicles" carry arms to Savimbi across the Caprivi Strip, a narrow stretch of Namibian land that separates Angola and Botswana, and then return "laden with ivory and tropical hardwood." It is estimated that the U.S.-backed UNITA rebels have killed possibly 100,000 elephants to finance their 12-year-old war against Angola. As the *Windhoek* (Namibia) *Observer* reported in 1984, "There are some ugly rumors attached to [the mysterious transport of containerized trucks to South Africa]—some of them so ugly that only the fate of being incarcerated in a cell of the Windhoek Prison stops us from telling the public what we know."

A second route begins in Zambia's Luangwa Valley, where more than 10,000 elephants are being poached annually. Van Note said this poaching and smuggling is aided by "corruption at the highest level of the Zambian government." Sources have said that most of this ivory leaves Zambia in sealed railway boxcars via the South African-owned railroad. The third route is through Mozambique, where RENAMO guerrilla fighters, financed and directed by South Africa, have "killed tens of thousands of elephants in recent years to finance their insurrection." The State Department estimates that over the last decade RENAMO has killed more than 100,000 Mozambican civilians as well.

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Harvard yard, yuppie heaven

CAMBRIDGE, MASS.—If we are to believe President-elect George Bush's attacks on "Harvard Square liberals," Harvard and the surrounding community is an outpost of granola-munching '60s leftovers and equally anachronistic liberal "eggheads." Yet as is immediately apparent to anyone who spends a few hours exploring Cambridge, Harvard Square is a yuppie heaven—not a left-wing hangout.

On campus, a seemingly endless file of highly-accessorized students head off to job interviews with New York and Boston investment banks. For these preppies, who have for eight years listened to a Republican administration preach the virtues of getting rich, the allure of Wall Street beckons. Not surprisingly, the intellectual atmosphere on campus has suffered. Now only a tiny group of radical faculty members are to be found. Harvard's innovative "social studies" program, inspired by '60s-era activists and radical intellectuals who sought to make social science critical and relevant, has been toned down. For example, the economics department has canceled the "radical" sections in its popular introduc-

tory course.

More ominously the Kennedy School of Government recently received a three-year \$1.2 million research grant from the CIA. As part of the program, Harvard faculty will provide "executive training sessions" for CIA analysts. In a similar vein, a government department faculty member was recently forced to resign as head of the Middle East studies program after it was revealed that he had secretly received a \$150,000 grant from the CIA. The terms of the grant allowed the agency the right to censor his work.

The changes in Harvard Square are conspicuous. With rents skyrocketing, posh shops—like Benetton and Urban Outfitters—have supplanted the cheap diners and cafeterias of '60s Cambridge. And the public space once occupied by the countercultural scene continues to be whittled down. Folk music hangouts like The Tab—where Joan Baez played in the early '60s—as well as independent theaters and cheap bars are becoming a thing of the past. With the exception of the ever-popular Brattle Theatre, the area's movie theaters have been bought out by commercial chains. The overpriced yuppie bars on Harvard Street cater to Harvard business, law, and

haven't yet fulfilled our purpose. When we don't have to do any more panels—when the last one is sewn in—that's when the quilt will be done."

—Amy Lindgren

Van Note's testimony and a recent Savimbi interview in *Paris Match*, where he admitted sending ivory to South Africa, has led the South African military to deny involvement in the arms-for-ivory deals. And pressure from the South African parliamentary opposition has forced South African Defense Minister Gen. Magnus Malan to order an internal inquiry into the allegations. Two other investigations are being conducted by the South African parliament and the minister of the environment.

Van Note told the subcommittee that while South Africa "projects the image of a conservation-minded model for Africa, [it] is in reality one of the largest wildlife outlaws in the world."

Some observers suspect that the CIA and possibly the State Department have known about the smuggling operation and may even have been involved. David Phillips, director of the San Francisco-based Earth Island Institute, said, "The Reagan administration has failed miserably to enforce endangered species laws in this country, as well as to live up to international treaties in general. You can be sure that they wouldn't interfere with their so-called freedom fighters. Whether it's drugs or endangered species, their lack of respect for law knows no bounds."

—Todd Steiner

Kennedy School students.

One radical '60s alumnus whose daughter now attends Harvard commented that he was astonished by the "intensity of the shopping scene" in today's square. Indeed, in the last 15 years numerous shopping malls and their high-priced specialty shops have sprouted up. The square has become a weekend haven for suburban teens armed with their parents' credit cards. And on it goes. A contractor just bought a block of property on Brattle Street. He plans to build another mall. This will mean the end of The Casablanca, a long-time hangout for assorted Harvard Square intellectuals.

This gap between the reality of the Harvard community and the rhetoric of the Republican campaign shouldn't be a surprise: the American right has long relied on hyperbolic redbaiting and anti-intellectualism. More disturbing is the fact that changes in Harvard Square exemplify a trend too long ignored by the American left. The bars, cafes, co-ops, theaters, and restaurants that activists and intellectuals have relied on as places for meeting, arguing and romancing are quickly vanishing.

—W.E. Scheuerman

hauled off Nicaraguan postage stamps, contraband crafts and company records. Among those records was a copy of the World Court decision that declared the U.S. embargo on Nicaragua illegal. But customs officials judged the Court's opinion to be irrelevant to their case and returned the document.

Memories of Walden Pond

The people of Concord, Mass., remember 19th-century philosopher and naturalist Henry David Thoreau, and not fondly. Judith Gaines of the *Boston Globe* reports that Thoreau's "practical conservation message, his call for continued public exposure to 'the tonic of wildness,' still rankles those who would develop areas such as Walden Woods and those who, in philosophy and lifestyle, march to a more orthodox drum." When teacher Anne McGrath wanted to introduce Thoreau to the town's second-graders she had to call a special parents' meeting. The idea was not popular. Said McGrath, "The general opinion was that Thoreau had wasted his college education skulking around in the woods...[And] some people say he was an ingrate, an odd stick who drank too much and sponged off nice Mr. Emerson." Locals also complain that Thoreau gave up teaching public school after two weeks, did not go to church, accidentally started a fire in Deacon Wheeler's woods, refused to pay poll taxes and chose a hut in the woods over his father's fine townhouse. He was also a thief. According to Concord meter maid Pauline Wilson, "A lot of women said they'd cool their pies on their window sills, and he'd come and take them."

Millions of dead boys and girls

"Out of sight, out of mind" was never more true than for the 3.65 million children who died last year because they "didn't have 50-cents worth of vaccine in their veins." Dr. James Grant, executive director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), reports that each year measles kills 2 million children, tetanus 1 million, whooping cough 600,000 and polio 50,000. Add to these deaths from communicable diseases the 4 million children who die each year from diarrhea, and you have an annual, but hardly noticed, holocaust. Grant recently told a World Conference on Medical Education in Edinburgh, Scotland, that "without exception, the major health threats of today can be most effectively combated by changes in human knowledge and behavior. The toll they take among children could be at least halved by empowering people with what is already known." The problem is that the medical-industrial complex values and rewards doctors that work with cutting-edge technology, not those who toil in the mundane fields of public health. That is one of the first lessons students learn in the world's medical schools—schools where less than 1 percent of class time is devoted to the study of public health. As Grant asked his colleagues, "Is that what the corporate medical community has decided—that medical education does not include health education as a significant concern?" Well, when there's a dollar to be made...

Thanks for your vote

Last week the Farmers Home Administration (FmHA) sent letters to more than 80,000 farmers telling them they were seriously behind in their loan payments and that they may face foreclosure. FmHA administrator Vance Clark insists that the decision to wait until a week after Election Day to send out the delinquency notices had nothing to do with politics.

We helped make it possible

The Bush-Quayle campaign made sure the televised image of furloughed convict Willy Horton was firmly imprinted on the minds of the American electorate. But few voters know anything about the creator of that furlough ad, Dennis Frankenberry of Milwaukee. The *Village Voice*'s Leslie Savan reports that Frankenberry was convicted in 1985 of hitting two men on a motorcycle and then fleeing the accident in his BMW and hiding out in a friend's house. One of the men he hit suffered permanent brain damage. Frankenberry, who was drunk at the time, was sentenced to 90 days in prison and ordered to perform 250 hours of community service. But he didn't spend all his time in prison. Through a furlough-like work-release program he was allowed to leave prison to work days at his ad agency.

The black electorate: ignored by the GOP and treated 'like pariahs' by Democrats

By Salim Muwakkil

CHICAGO

ONE OF THE clearest messages of the 1988 elections is the continued marginalization of African-American voters. While the number of black elected officials continues to rise—although at a much slower rate than in the last two decades—issues important to blacks are losing political appeal. Both presidential candidates sought political gain by distancing themselves from those issues.

In fact, Republican George Bush's celebrated "handlers" devised a campaign strategy that explicitly ignored black voters while exploiting whites' racial fears. Democratic candidate Michael Dukakis garnered nearly 90 percent of the black vote—even while holding the black community at arm's length—and still lost big.

Since 1964 most white Americans have voted Republican in presidential elections, and the 1988 contest confirmed this trend. The polarization is most pronounced in the once-Democratic South, where Bush won 67 percent of the white vote, according to a *New York Times*/CBS News poll. The president-elect won the white vote in every region of the country. The Dukakis campaign bent over backward to woo wayward whites, but even in his home region—the Northeast—the Massachusetts governor only attracted 44 percent of the white votes.

"Black people have come out the clear

losers in the election," said Jim Vance, a commentator on television's *America's Black Forum*. "The Republicans don't need us and the Democrats take us for granted but treat us like pariahs," he said.

Many black analysts worry that President-elect Bush's crass but successful strategy may have set the mold for campaigns to come and may have sanctioned racial dema-

POLITICS

gogery as a legitimate campaign tactic. By accommodating—and perhaps fueling—the electorate's growing racial polarization, such an approach enhances a white national candidate's chances of victory.

Now the good news: There are, however, some bright spots in the overall gloom. Even as national politicians continue their shift away from black concerns, the number of black elected officials is higher than ever before in U.S. history. Although figures from the November election are not yet available, the number of black officeholders is nearing 7,000. By contrast, there were only 1,469 in 1970.

What's more, membership in the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) was increased to 24, with the addition of Democrat Donald Payne, New Jersey's first black representative. Payne, a two-term Newark councilman, ran for the 10th District seat of retiring Peter Rodino. He had strong party backing and his

victory in the predominantly black and Hispanic district was overwhelming.

The 24 lawmakers of the CBC comprise just over 5 percent of the House's total membership while blacks make up more than 11 percent of the voting-age population. (There are no blacks in the Senate.) But despite its numerical weakness, the CBC wields disproportionate political clout. Its members include chairmen of five full committees, two select committees and 18 subcommittees. The caucus is considered one of the most influential power blocs in Congress.

The re-election of CBC member Mike Espy (D-MS), with nearly 40 percent of the white vote, rekindled hope for the future of coalition politics. Espy's success at attracting multiracial support bucked national trends. Even more significantly, he did it in Mississippi, a state with a lurid history of racial divisiveness.

Espy worked extremely hard to gain that vote of confidence, explains press aide Karen Hinton. "He went to meetings everywhere," Hinton says. "He visited white functions as well as black functions and took his message directly to his constituents."

Hinton says Espy convinced the whites in his district that he was just as concerned with their well-being as he was with blacks'. "His district is among the poorest in the country and both blacks and whites know that the only way they can get off the bottom is by working together."

While Espy bucked one trend, his re-election is consistent with another: voters overwhelmingly supported incumbents. It was this trend that dashed the hopes of Louisiana Democrat Faye Williams, another black candidate from the Deep South. Many pundits had predicted a Williams victory—she lost by a hair in 1986—but incumbent Republican Clyde Holloway defeated her by a substantial margin.

The two black candidates for Senate seats, both Republicans, lost their bids. Alan Keyes of Maryland was handily defeated by popular incumbent Paul Sarbanes, and Maurice Dawkins was trounced by former Virginia Gov. Charles Robb in the Virginia race.

The back of the political bus: Although final numbers are not yet available, black elected officials also made gains in state and local elections throughout the country. But even including the gains from November's election, the percentage of black elected officials is way below their percentage in the voting age population. Before the election, the Joint Center for Political Studies (JCPS)—a Washington-based, black think tank—listed a total of 6,829 black elected officials, a mere 1.5 percent of all the country's elective offices.

What's more, there has been a decided decline in the annual rate of growth of black elected officials. According to the JCPS, the rate of increase in the number of black officeholders between 1986 and 1987 was 2.2 percent, one of the lowest rates registered since the center began keeping track. The preliminary findings for the November 1988 election suggest an even steeper decline in the rate

of growth.

According to a JCPS report, the primary reason for this slowdown is the near saturation of majority-black jurisdictions and legislative districts by black officials. "Unless blacks begin building effective coalitions with other groups there will be very little growth in black political power," notes Milton Morris, JCPS director of research.

And, Morris notes, "The record of whites voting for black candidates is not a good one. In fact, we have poll data that clearly demonstrates how some whites refuse to vote for blacks purely out of racial bias." Adding to the difficulty of winning white votes, according to the JCPS report, are the traditional racial barriers that hamper blacks' full participation in the political system. Those barriers include:

- Election laws and systems—such as gerrymandering, at-large and runoff elections—created to dilute the power of the black vote;

- Socioeconomic factors, like poverty and a lack of education, that discourage blacks from participation;

- Psychological barriers, such as fear, apathy and excessive deference to whites, that result from years of political exclusion; and

- Institutional obstacles, such as inadequate information concerning voter-registration procedures, inconvenient times and places of registration, the scarcity of black registration officials in some locations, and inaccessible polling places on election day.

Spin-doctor Jesse: At a recent meeting at the Operation PUSH headquarters in Chicago, former Democratic candidate Jesse Jackson made a strong case that Dukakis lost the election because he "took up our message too late." Jackson rejected the competing analysis that blames the Democrats' loss on their proximity to the "L-word."

In Jackson's view, Dukakis lost the election in 12 states by a total of less than 600,000 votes. "If those 600,000 voters had switched from Bush to Dukakis in the 12 states, he would have won a total of 280 electoral votes, enough to win." He said Bush had no mandate "except for the Pledge of Allegiance," and "did not win convincingly even in a time of relative peace and prosperity."

Jackson said the election indicates that the era of conservative reaction has ended. "Democrats will control 31 state senates, 37 state assemblies and 28 governorships. This is a terrible blow to the Republicans' hope of controlling the redistricting battle in 1991."

Jackson's view on the national election is disputed by Morris of the JCPS. "I take strong issue with the notion that Dukakis would have won with more aggressive populist appeals," Morris says. "There's no doubt that his closing days of liberal themes helped close the gap. But that was only among Democrats who were looking for a reason to feel good about their candidate. All polls indicate that the U.S. public is predominantly non-liberal. Now," he adds, "that may not make Jackson happy, but it happens to be the facts."

Since issues important to blacks are still identified as liberal issues, African-Americans are out of style politically. The optimism inspired by Jackson in the beginning of the campaign has been tempered by more sober assessments as blacks continue their quest for political equality. □

Democrat Donald Payne is New Jersey's first black member of Congress.



By John B. Judis

WASHINGTON

JAMES A. BAKER III STARTED IN THE REAGAN administration as an outsider: a Texan among Californians, a moderate among conservative zealots. But by the time he resigned last August as secretary of the treasury to run George Bush's presidential campaign, he had achieved complete control of administration economic policy. The administration's politics had become Baker's.

As Bush's secretary of state—as well as his closest friend and most trusted adviser—Baker may well become the dominant force in the Bush administration—outshining the president the way that Secretary of State Henry Kissinger outshone President Gerald Ford. People here are already talking about a "Bush-Baker administration." "Baker was regent for eight years, and now he is going to be prime minister for four," says columnist Robert Kuttner.

If Baker's record as Reagan's chief of staff and secretary of the treasury is an indication, he will seek accommodation rather than confrontation, whether in Central America or Western Europe. And he should prove to be more committed than his predecessors to crafting bipartisan approaches. One Washington insider described Baker as the kind of Republican that Democrats used to appoint to high Cabinet offices.

A pragmatist: The 58-year-old Baker first met Bush 30 years ago, when they were neighbors in the posh River Oaks section of Houston. Baker is as close to being "old wealth" and "Eastern establishment" as a Texan can be. The scion of a prominent Houston family—his great-grandfather founded the law firm Baker & Botts, which is now one of the nation's largest—Baker graduated from the Hill School and Princeton. After a tour in the Marines, he attended the University of Texas Law School. At the Houston corporate law firm of Andrews, Kurth, Campbell and Jones, Baker rose to managing partner at the age of 40.

When Baker's wife died in 1970, Bush convinced him to run Bush's Senate campaign in Houston's Harris County. In 1975 Baker joined Ford's Commerce Department, and in 1976 he recruited delegates for Ford's presidential primary campaign against Ronald Reagan. When Bush decided to run for president in 1980, he called on Baker to manage his campaign.

Then in July 1980, after Reagan had captured the nomination and had chosen Bush as his vice-presidential candidate, Baker joined the Reagan campaign. He endeared himself to Nancy and Ronald Reagan when he convinced the candidate, against the advice of his longtime California aides, that he should engage in presidential debates. After the election, at the urging of Nancy Reagan and of campaign aides Stuart Spencer and Michael Deaver, Reagan appointed Baker chief of staff.

In that post, Baker was supposed to share power with Deputy Chief of Staff Deaver and with longtime Reagan crony Edwin Meese, who was White House counselor. But with Deaver's help, Baker became the first among equals, establishing control over both White House paper flow and the legislative battles for the president's tax and budget plans.

Baker, Deaver and two Baker aides, Richard Darman and David Gergen, became known as the "pragmatists." Conservatives attacked them for their willingness to compromise with Congress, their responsiveness to Wall Street Republicanism and their indif-

Hail to America's prime minister, James A. Baker



In the Bush administration James Baker (above) will have only one peer—George Bush himself.

ference to the far right's social agenda. In 1982 Baker tried to get Reagan to support the extension of the Voting Rights Act. He also tried to head off a Reagan plan to cut Social Security. And to lessen the deficit, Baker tried to get Reagan to water down his tax bill and pare down Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger's military budget increases.

Baker versus the hardliners: As chief of staff, Baker did not coordinate foreign policy, but he earned the ire of Secretary of State Alexander Haig by torpedoing Haig's plan for concentrating decision-making in his own hands. He also opposed Haig's proposal to "go to the source" of Communist subversion in Central America by blockading Cuba, and he offended administration hardliners by advising a softer stance on the Soviet Union.

In October 1983 Baker became embroiled in a bitter factional dispute over foreign policy. The year before, Reagan's old friend William Clark had replaced Richard Allen as national security adviser. In foreign policy debates Clark sided with hardliners Meese, Weinberger, Central Intelligence Agency Director William Casey and Ambassador to the U.N. Jeane Kirkpatrick against Baker, Darman and Secretary of State George Shultz. After almost two years of infighting, Clark had had enough and asked Reagan to move him to the Interior Department.

Darman, Shultz and Deaver convinced Reagan to replace Clark with Baker. But when word of the plan got around, Clark, Casey, Weinberger and Meese protested vigorously. At a heated White House meeting, they told Reagan that Baker's appointment would send the "wrong signals" to the Soviet Union. Casey termed the appointment "intolerable" and urged the president to appoint Kirkpatrick instead. Reagan decided not to transfer Baker, but Baker and Shultz did get the president to appoint Robert McFarlane, rather than Kirkpatrick, as Clark's successor. This factional struggle recurred over the next three years. Battles were waged over

the administration's polygraph policy and the plan to sell Iran arms for hostages. By 1988 almost all the foreign-policy hardliners were gone; Shultz and Baker reigned supreme.

Coordinating currencies: In January 1985 Baker convinced Treasury Secretary Don Regan to switch jobs. In that position, Baker successfully pressured Federal Reserve Chairman Paul Volcker to keep interest rates down. Baker also helped get a tax re-

THE CABINET

form bill through Congress that was originally drafted by Sen. Bill Bradley (D-NJ). But he will be most remembered for getting the other advanced capitalist countries to join the U.S. in regulating world currency values.

Under Regan, the Treasury Department had pursued a policy of "benign neglect" toward the dollar, allowing it to rise or fall according to the whim of international speculators. The resulting sharp increase in the dollar's value—as foreign investors were attracted by high U.S. interest rates—priced American goods out of foreign markets and led to record trade deficits.

Secretary of State Baker will be more committed than his predecessors to crafting bipartisan approaches.

When Baker took over, he abandoned Regan's laissez-faire approach for a dirigist strategy, convincing West Germany, Japan, France and the United Kingdom—the "G-5" nations—to join the U.S. in devaluing the dollar. The agreement, reached Sept. 22, 1985, at the Plaza Hotel in New York, inaugurated biannual meetings at which these countries, joined by Canada and Italy, set "target zones" for the dollar and other major

world currencies. Since its acceptance, Baker's Plaza accord has bolstered American exports and improved the investment climate internationally.

Baker's greatest failure was his inability to resolve the Third World debt crisis. Spiraling debts owed by countries like Mexico, Argentina and Brazil to American, Japanese and West German banks have not only threatened bank solvency, but also have undermined the American balance of trade. These countries, faced with mounting interest payments abroad, had to slash imports and raise exports. From 1981 through 1985, American trade with the six most heavily indebted Latin American countries dropped from \$32 billion to \$22 billion, while imports rose from \$28 billion to \$38 billion.

In trying to reach an agreement on international currency, Baker moved quietly, but when addressing the debt crisis he launched a highly publicized scheme, dubbed the "Baker Plan." Modeled after a Volcker proposal, Baker's plan eschewed any government aid or reduction by banks of interest payments. Instead it promised increased funding from banks and international lending institutions if countries like Mexico agreed to "Reaganize" their economies. Except for a few smaller countries like the Ivory Coast and Ecuador, the Third World nations spurned Baker's plan, and the debt crisis grew worse.

In October Baker's successor, Nicholas Brady, broke with the plan when he arranged a \$3.5 billion loan to Mexico so that the country could pay its debts to Citicorp and other American banks. In the coming year Brady will be pressured by the Japanese and the U.S. Congress to abandon the Baker plan entirely.

Winning is power: Baker succeeded as both the campaign manager and an administration official because he mastered the political process. As Reagan's chief of staff, Baker's motto was "winning is power." He always thought it more important to compromise and win than to hold out for principle and lose.

He also knew how to manipulate the media for his own ends. Like Kissinger, he charmed both liberal and conservative journalists, and destroyed his opponents with well-timed leaks. One Japanese economist credited Baker's press offensive with obtaining Japanese agreement to the Plaza Accords.

As a campaign manager, Baker ruthlessly pressed his client's case. In 1980 he urged Reagan to attack Carter directly rather than stressing his own accomplishments. Baker admitted using purloined Carter campaign briefing books to help prepare Reagan for his debate with Carter. This year Baker backed Bush campaign manager Lee Atwater's plan to use the Pledge of Allegiance and the Willie Horton case to discredit Michael Dukakis.

In the Bush administration Baker will have only one peer—George Bush himself. Baker's loyal lieutenants like Darman are expected to fill high positions. Foreign policy hardliners like Jeane Kirkpatrick and Richard Perle will be on the sidelines. His only problem will be figuring out how to steer the U.S. through conflicts and crises over which it has increasingly less control.

How Baker will accomplish this remains unclear, but it is widely rumored here that he has already taken one auspicious step: he will replace Assistant Secretary of State Elliott Abrams, the principal defender of the administration's contra policy in Central America. □

IN THESE TIMES NOV. 23-DEC. 6, 1988 7

NEW YORK

By Daniel Lazare

NEW YORK

AT FIRST, IT SEEMED SO SIMPLE. SINCE AIDS is spread among intravenous drug users through the use of contaminated hypodermics, why not supply addicts with clean needles as a practical alternative to sharing dirty "works"? Why not help addicts help themselves while at the same time blocking the chief avenue for the spread of the epidemic into the larger community? Since New York is one of only 11 states to ban non-prescription needles in the first place, why not take this modest step to save lives?

But nothing is ever simple or logical when it comes to AIDS or drugs. It took three years for the state to muster the courage to allow a small stringently controlled clean-needles experiment in New York City. Now, after a little more than a week of operation, the program is struggling in the face of a furious campaign aimed at ensuring that it never gets off the ground.

The wall of opposition includes the right-wing tabloids, liberal Councilwoman Ruth Messinger and virtually the entire black political establishment. The *Daily News* has called the clean-needles program "madness" and "an act of surrender" in the war on drugs, while Messinger, a possible mayoral candidate next year, says it sends the wrong message at a time when addicts who want to give up drugs altogether are turned away from treatment centers for lack of space.

Shooting from the hip: Simultaneously, black city council members have slammed the experiment as "murder," "planned assassination," even "genocide." Police Commissioner Ben War says he is suspicious of "doctors conducting experiments...against blacks." Special Narcotics Prosecutor Sterling Johnson, the city's other top black law enforcement officer, said two cops recently killed by drug dealers would "probably turn over in their graves" if they knew the city was making it easier for addicts to shoot drugs.

Rep. Charles Rangel of Harlem, Rep. Floyd Flake of Brooklyn and a dozen other heavy-hitters in the black community recently published a statement in the *Amsterdam News*, the black weekly, assailing the program as "a recklessly dangerous experiment" that will "legalize, condone and encourage intravenous drug abuse." Instead of clean needles, the group called for "increased law enforcement" to prevent "a breakdown of law and order in minority-group communities."

All of which goes to show that politicians

How the war on drugs hurts the war on AIDS

have fallen into a dangerous drug habit of their own, one of shooting first and thinking later, if at all. It is particularly dangerous in this instance because, even though people commonly think of AIDS as a gay disease, IV drug users in New York have a higher rate of infection and are more likely to pass the HIV virus on to the surrounding community. And since New York's estimated 200,000 to 250,000 IV drug users are mostly black and Hispanic, the people most directly in the line of fire are overwhelmingly black and Hispanic as well.

The danger can be gleaned from statistics collected by the state department of health and local experts such as Yolanda Serrano, executive director of the highly regarded Association for Drug Abuse Prevention and Treatment, or ADAPT. Gay men mostly have sex with other gay men, but an estimated 80 percent of New York's IV drug users have

An experimental clean-needles program for New York City addicts might help slow the spread of AIDS. But it is opposed by many politicians, as well as the black establishment.

regular sexual relations outside the IV drug population. Gay men do not give birth, of course, but wives and girlfriends of IV drug users do—to an estimated 5,000 children a year. Some 60,000 IV drug users are themselves women of childbearing age, which is why it was no surprise when a state study found that one baby in 61 born in New York City last December and January had been exposed to the HIV virus, while in the hard-hit Bronx it was one in 50.

Moreover, not only are most IV drug users black or Hispanic, but evidence indicates that the rate of infection among black and Hispanic addicts is three times that of white addicts, according to Dr. Norman Zinberg of

the Harvard Medical School. Consequently, junkies are not only more likely to be black or Hispanic, but black and Hispanic junkies are more likely to carry the HIV virus and spread it to others. Although blacks comprise just 25 percent of the city's population, they already account for 32 percent of all adult AIDS cases.

On one level, therefore, the solid wall of black opposition seems inexplicable; yet on another level, it isn't. Black politicians oppose clean needles because they see it as clearing the way for legalization. And to the degree that clean needles are, at least symbolically, a step toward a more rational, less hysterical drug policy, they may actually be right—although their fears of a tidal wave of drug use that would follow legalization are without historical foundation. Lacking any alternative to the current policy, they see no choice but to continue with force, violence and repression, i.e., heavy sword-rattling toward drug kingpins like Panama's Noriega abroad and stepped-up police assaults on users and dealers at home. Ultimately, this plays into the hands of the right, as Rangel must have realized earlier this year when the Omnibus Drug Bill came up on the floor of the House for a vote. Torn between his desire for a war on drugs and his long-standing opposition to the death penalty, he nonetheless voted in favor of a bill providing for capital punishment for certain drug dealers and sweeping administrative penalties for those convicted of minor offenses such as simple possession.

The damage done: Meanwhile, the damage to the clean-needles campaign has been considerable, possibly even fatal. First broached in 1985, it took three years before Gov. Mario Cuomo and state Health Commissioner David Axelrod could muster the courage to approve a timid, small-scale experiment involving just 400 addicts, only half of whom would be supplied with syringes. To be sure that they didn't sell the needles to buy drugs, users would have to present a used hypodermic in order to get a clean one in return. (If they lose it, they're out of luck.)

Instead of an aggressive outreach program like those in operation in Liverpool, Amster-

dam and elsewhere, the New York experiment was designed so that the onus would be on addicts to find their way to the clean-needle program themselves—and then only after obtaining a letter attesting that they had been turned away from a recognized treatment facility. Participants could not be on probation or parole, and although the city-supplied hypodermics would be legal, they could still be busted for possession even if it amounted to nothing more than residue in the syringe. Legally, they would occupy a twilight zone between a city-sanctioned experiment and the outlawed world of drugs.

Hence the program was designed to bypass the most down-and-out users, even though they are most in need of intervention and help. At the same time, other aspects of the program as it is now designed render the whole experiment scientifically dubious. To determine whether clean needles will slow or halt the spread of AIDS, participants should be representative of the IV drug-using population. Yet by asking them to travel to Lower Manhattan, register with a city agency and pose for a photo—things that most junkies are normally loath to do—the city has fairly guaranteed, as one medical authority noted, that the subjects will be far from typical. The notion of a control group of 200 users who will not get free needles yet will regularly visit the study center is also problematic. City health officials say they hope to lure members of this group by offering free food, yet chances are that if any respond, they will not be representative of the IV drug users either.

The program has also been criticized as too small, too short—scheduled to last just six to nine months—and, very possibly, too late. "In portions of the South Bronx, you have HIV in already 60 percent of the IV population," said Norman Zinberg of Harvard. Distributing clean needles will result in "very little improvement, since you're already dealing with a saturated situation." If the experiment fails to come up with a positive finding, as now seems likely, he added, odds are diminished that the approach will be tried in other cities where it would actually do more good.

"We should be trying it in cities like Chicago or Boston, where the IV rate isn't as high as in New York, although it's climbing," Zinberg said.

What works? For the clean-needles approach to work, it would likely have to be modeled after programs in the Netherlands, and even Margaret Thatcher's Great Britain, where drugs and AIDS are treated as health problems and the overall aim, at least ostensibly, is to minimize harm to the user and to society. Addicts are supplied with the means for safe drug use because "you can't rehabilitate a dead addict," as a British official once remarked to an American drug expert. Once users pick up their needle, they are then free to consult with doctors and counselors about drugs and related matters. The idea is to use clean needles to plug IV drug users into a larger health-care network. Far from encouraging drug use, one study in Holland showed that many addicts enrolled in the clean-needles program subsequently cut down on drugs and that some, aided by counselors, gave them up altogether.

Unfortunately, in the U.S. the trend is in the opposite direction—toward zero tolerance, an ever more hysterical war on drugs, further repression and, most tragically in New York, racial polarization of what should be a purely public-health issue. □

By Kevin Kelly

BELFAST

NORTHERN IRELAND'S TROUBLES—THE decades-long struggle between 1.5 million Catholics and Protestants over national identity and economic privilege—has entered a new round of violence and repression. Last summer the Irish Republican Army (IRA), a clandestine group of 300 to 500 fighters dedicated to ending British rule over the province, unleashed a new bombing campaign. IRA bombs have claimed 84 lives this year.

So far the IRA has focused on two targets: British soldiers and Belfast's commercial district. This year IRA bombs have killed 34 members of the British defense forces, compared with 11 during all of 1987. The aim, as always, is to raise the cost enough to force a British withdrawal from Ireland.

The bombing of Belfast's shopping district is new. So far it has caused in excess of \$15 million in damages and left several civilian casualties. During the late '70s the IRA suspended bombing of commercial targets because the resulting cost in lives and jobs proved unpopular with their working-class Catholic supporters.

But the new offensive has some popular support because it is designed to shatter the British effort to portray Northern Ireland as calm and ripe for corporate investment. The IRA opposes attempts to develop Belfast, such as the \$400 million docklands redevelopment project. Since these designs hold little for the poor Catholics who support the IRA, the organization expects no backlash.

"We will fight any efforts to normalize British occupation," says Danny Morrison, a leader of the IRA's political wing, Sinn Fein. "We want the British to know nothing will be normal until they get out."

Thatcher attack: British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher responded in late October with measures aimed at curbing the IRA even at the cost of basic British liberties. One proposed law will remove the right of accused persons to remain silent without implying their own guilt. Another law will ban radio and TV interviews with IRA supporters—a move designed to lower the profile of Sinn Fein's telegenic leader Gerry Adams. Authorities will also be given new powers to track and impound bank accounts and assets used by the IRA. Defending these measures, Thatcher says, "In a war, you have to suspend some of your civil liberties for a time."

Thatcher's reaction is one more setback to the approach advocated by the Irish government and the left-of-center Social Democratic and Labor Party. The SDLP, which has consistently won an electoral majority among Northern Ireland's 500,000 Catholics, supports the non-violent reunification of Ireland. These two parties to the conflict have tried to steer Thatcher toward a mix of economic and political reforms aimed at undercutting the IRA's working-class support.

Irish Prime Minister Charles Haughey and SDLP leader John Hume argue that the framework for a new approach was established by the 1985 Anglo-Irish Agreement. It set up mechanisms of cooperation between Dublin and London and pledged the two governments to reforms in security and employment. It also left open the possibility of reunification, which caused Protestants to take a hard line against the pact.

But so far little has been achieved. Indeed



Tactics have changed, hate has remained, since this 1981 IRA funeral.

IRA battles British rule with taxis as well as bombs

a deliberate British policy of killing IRA suspects has the Irish government fuming. Despite Irish protests, the shoot-to-kill policy uncovered in 1985 by British constable John Stalker remains in place. Last March the governments bickered over the execution-style

NORTHERN IRELAND

killings of three active IRA members by British troops in Gibraltar.

One senior Irish official says, "[British actions] are a recruiting force for the IRA."

Both the British and Irish governments agree the IRA is better armed, staffed and led than at any time since the troubles re-emerged 20 years ago. During the late '70s the organization appeared to be in terminal decline, decimated by jailings and poor leadership.

But it was snatched from the brink by the emotional and creative forces unleashed by hunger strikes conducted by IRA prisoners in the "Maze" prison. In all, 10 prisoners died most notably Bobby Sands, who was elected a member of the British Parliament on his deathbed.

Sands' election led a younger generation of leaders, including Adams and Morrison, to recognize the usefulness of the ballot box as a tool for political organization. Prior to this Sinn Fein had advocated a boycott of elections and served primarily as a retirement society for old IRA men. Today a revitalized Sinn Fein has 60 local councillors, and 16 advice centers in Northern Ireland that provide assistance to Catholics seeking housing or jobs. The party also has one member of Parliament (MP) in Westminster, Gerry Adams, but he continues to refuse to take his seat.

Hard times: Sinn Fein's political success was matched by tough days for the IRA. During the early '80s the organization was riddled with informers. "Every time the IRA went out for an action, the British seemed to be waiting for them," says Eamon Mallie, author of a new book on the IRA.

In addition the British attempted to wreck the IRA by judicial fiat. Between 1983 and 1985 10 so-called "supergrass" trials took place in Northern Ireland. These trials were based on the testimony of a "supergrass"—a participant in the crimes charged who informed against alleged accomplices. Sixty-five of more than 200 defendants prosecuted in these trials were convicted using uncorroborated testimony.

All but one of these convictions were overturned. The practice ended after an outcry by groups like Amnesty International. But the experience further convinced most Catholics that justice was unobtainable within the British legal system.

When the supergrass trials ended, the IRA executed informers and dispatched arms missions to Europe and Libya. Through these missions, the IRA obtained Semtex, a powerful Czech explosive that is easy to transport. In September the IRA placed two car bombs in Belfast using between 250-500 pounds of Semtex. One bomb blew out about 1,000 windows and caused \$10 million in damages. In August a Semtex bomb killed eight British soldiers in the village of Ballygawley.

The Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC), which polices the province, believes the IRA has several tons of Semtex stashed in bunkers throughout Ireland. RUC officials believe the IRA now has surface-to-air missiles capable of shooting down planes and helicopters.

Last June the IRA brought down a helicopter in South Armagh using a heavy machine gun. Since the only British presence in border areas like Armagh is aerial, the new IRA capabilities are worrisome. "Heavy weaponry could give control of the countryside to the IRA," says Mallie.

Strong IRA finances have helped the resupply effort. Gone are the days of bank robberies and kidnappings. Today the IRA is a business. Its annual income of \$7 million comes from a variety of sources including real estate agencies, pubs, tax fraud schemes, protection rackets, and taxis. The 600 taxis are the primary mode of transport in Belfast's Catholic sections. They have a reputation for being cheap, reliable and they provide about 2,000 jobs.

The IRA has been able to count on the actions of British troops to provide recruits. "Their behavior is appalling," says Brian Feeney, one of 105 SDLP councillors in Northern Ireland. Last spring British troops twice shot Catholics with plastic bullets at close range. Moreover, menacing armed British troops decked out in battle fatigues continue to flood Catholic neighborhoods. "It feels like occupation, it's so excessive," says Feeney.

Catholic discontent is fueled by job discrimination. Catholic unemployment is currently at 35 percent, a rate 2.5 times greater than Protestant unemployment. So far the British have done little to address this problem, created by their historical allocation of jobs

to the Protestant population. London seems hampered by fear of the Protestants and Thatcher's love affair with the free market. Although the British Parliament will pass fair employment legislation in the next session, it will contain no affirmative action plan to reallocate jobs to Catholics.

Madness to the method: Still, Hume, who is one of three SDLP MPs and himself a member of the European Parliament's socialist group, blames the IRA for much of the province's problems. "The IRA's method has become more sacred than its cause," he says. "All their violence has done is lengthen the dole queues and make employers afraid to come here."

Last summer Hume held a series of meetings with Adams. Hume says he wanted to persuade Adams to end the violence.

Morrison sees it differently: "[The talks] show the other parties take us seriously as a political force."

For their part, the Irish and British will begin a review of the Anglo-Irish Agreement this month. The Irish are expected to push for more reforms with little result. Their inability to move Thatcher has led many Northern Irish Catholics to wonder what, if any, leverage Dublin has.

It now appears no movement will occur until Thatcher leaves the political scene. The Irish government takes heart from a new British Labour Party document advocating the "harmonization" of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland as a beginning toward reunification. This tactic envisions a coupling of electrical authorities, monetary systems and tariff regimes.

For the moment the Protestants seem cowed. The Anglo-Irish Agreement disoriented them by ending their veto over British policy. Despite the bluster of old racists like the Rev. Ian Paisley, who insist the link with Britain will never be weakened and the Catholics will never be equals, Thatcher has not abandoned the accord. But the Protestants, through the security forces, remain heavily armed. Civil war remains a haunting specter.

Still, no unionist politician is willing to negotiate power-sharing with the Catholics, let alone reunification. "It's very difficult to get any agreement with the Protestants when the IRA is bombing and killing," says one Irish official. "They only exacerbate the Protestants' siege mentality."

But Morrison and others think a prolonged armed struggle will break the will of the Protestants. What they neglect to say is that 55 percent of the 2,700 killed in Northern Ireland since 1969 have been Catholic, mainly murdered by IRA bombs gone awry. It is equally possible that the IRA could break the will of the Catholic population.

Yet if the current round of violence has any epilogue, it is that no political program is emanating from London. This lack of direction has alienated the Protestants, who believe their power is slipping and their identity is under attack. It has also driven a wedge between the Catholics in the North and in the Republic; Dublin promised the Anglo-Irish accord would produce reforms that have not materialized.

If nothing else, the new IRA violence articulates a rage against this policy paralysis. "People are becoming cannibalistic," says Mallie. "The alienation is frightening." □
Kevin Kelly is a Dallas-based journalist who recently returned from Northern Ireland.

Kenosha

Continued from page 3

marina and retail mall project, will bring the city squarely into the service-sector age, with its attendant reduction in wages, benefits, job security and self-respect. In the words of Bybee: "Basically, Chrysler has dropped an atomic bomb on Kenosha."

The fallout will be extensive. Losses in local property and real estate tax revenues, which were not calculated in the union-commissioned study, will lead to an almost certain drop in the city's capacity to provide basic services such as education, fire and police protection and sanitation. The shock waves will spread to the city's remaining business community. Insurance rates will rise due to cutbacks in security and firefighting forces. The education level of the area's

total work force will drop, and the quality of the labor force as a whole will be reduced.

All of this will lead to further losses in public-sector revenues that will have to be balanced by layoffs at the municipal and county level, and further tax increases to homeowners and businesses. Enterprises that are not expected to suffer much include retail liquor stores, gun shops and illicit drug sales.

Rates are also predicted to surge in the areas of crime, suicide, spouse and child abuse, drug and alcohol addiction and murder. Also to rise are stress-related diseases such as ulcers, high blood pressure, heart attacks, insomnia and mental disorders.

Anger: Of course, the greater costs will be borne disproportionately by black, poorly educated, essentially unskilled workers. More than 12 percent of the Chrysler employ-

ees to be laid off this year are black, and are expected to be unemployed longer than their white co-workers. Meanwhile, slightly more than half of the total work force is expected to be without work for at least two years. All this has workers and local residents angry—at Chrysler, at politicians, even at the UAW.

Next door to Freddy's is Freddy's East. Inside sits a man who just got off the first shift. "I think they sold us down the river," he says about the UAW leadership. A number of union officers will indeed remain on the job for the full five years of remaining production. "They were looking out for their interests long before they were looking out for us. It's just politics."

Longtime plant worker Jesse Sewell agrees. "The union ain't worth two cents," he says. "They gave us a dirty deal all along."

Such grim talk about the organization that fought to bring average wages to the \$14-an-hour level is not all that surprising. It is human nature to lay blame in times of frustration, and Lee Iacocca does not make it down to Kenosha often enough to take any of the flak for the corporation's imminent move.

At Freddy's, the T-shirt with its symbolic hand gesture is another way for the displaced workers to deal with that frustration. A bit of humor helps to make the best of things when hard times come. A man tells the story of how the governor came to the bar not too long ago.

"I gave Tommy Thompson that shirt," the man says. "I told him to wear it the next time he negotiates with Chrysler."

"He just laughed."

W.P. Norton is a Madison, Wis., journalist.

AN URGENT APPEAL

Nicaraguan Hurricane Crisis Worsening IMMEDIATE AID NEEDED TO SAVE LIVES

Hurricane Joan, the worst natural disaster in Nicaragua's history, will tax the country's 3 million people for years to come. The tragedy has worsened as malaria, infection, and hunger spread.

- 122 people are dead and hundreds are critically wounded. 220,000 people are homeless.
- 20% of the coffee, \$2.5 million of banana exports, and much of the bean and rice crops are lost.
- The entire Atlantic coast city of Bluefields was leveled. More than 75% of the sugar, fishing and palm oil industry are destroyed. 11,000 cattle are dead, and 100,000 acres of tropical rain forest are ravaged.
- Over 600 schools, 20 hospitals and clinics, 250 miles of roads and bridges are destroyed or damaged.

Immediately following the hurricane, U.S.-backed contras killed 18 people and ambushed 2 ambulances—for years, Nicaraguans have suffered U.S.-sponsored military attacks and an economic embargo—and they now face 4 years of a Bush administration. The massive destruction caused by the hurricane has compounded this crisis.

The U.S. government refuses to send emergency assistance or to permit Nicaraguans to come to the U.S. to raise funds. But money is desperately needed. Please give generously to help fund the reconstruction of Nicaragua.

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By David R. Dye

SAN JOSE, COSTA RICA

FOR THE LAST 40 YEARS, SINCE THEIR MIDDLE-class revolution of 1948, Costa Ricans have enjoyed a prosperity and political stability that are the envy of their neighbors. While the rest of Central America endured dictatorships or violent revolution, the *ticos*, as Costa Ricans call themselves, benefited from the creation of Latin America's most advanced welfare state outside of Cuba. All this, in the opinion of some Costa Ricans, may soon be changing, quickly and radically.

What disturbs citizens of the "Central American Switzerland" are the economic policies of President Oscar Arias, which threaten at one and the same time to ruin the nation's small farmers, undermine the ruling National Liberation Party (PLN)—the architect of the country's prosperity—and ultimately shake the foundations of the political system.

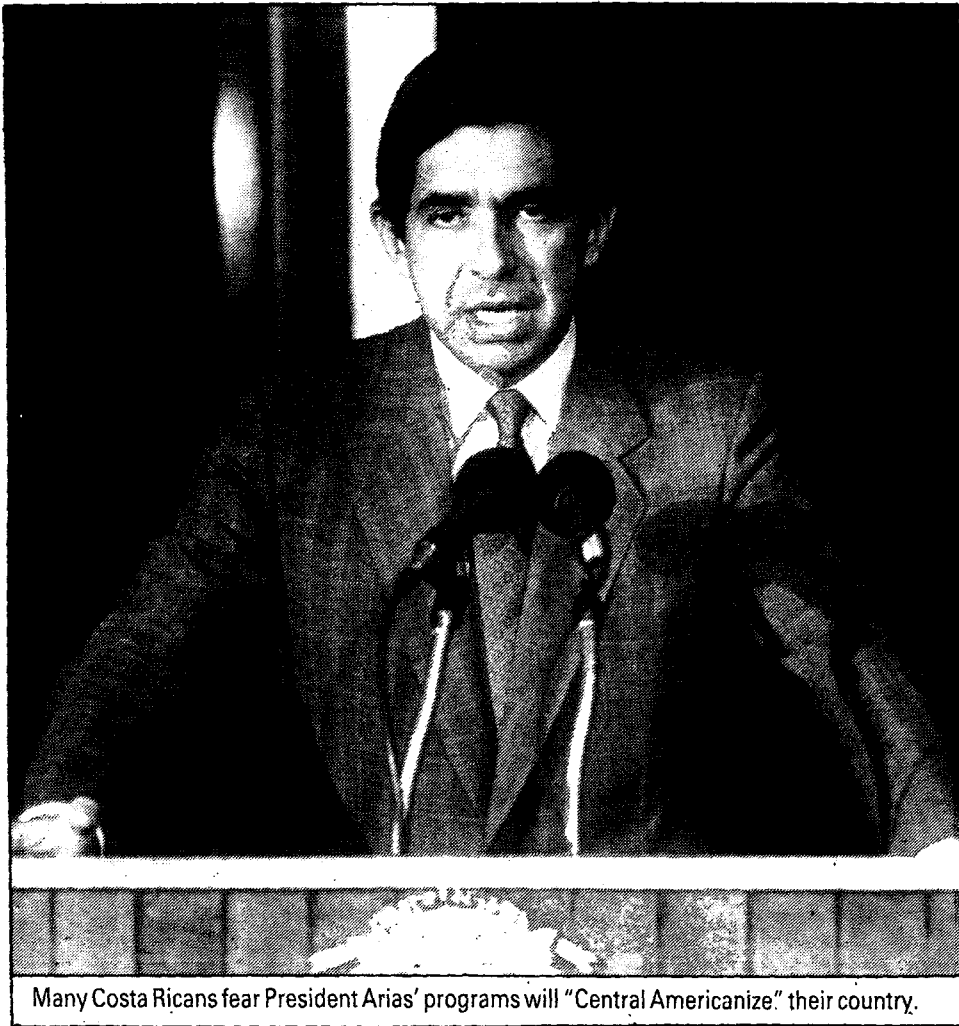
Today it is not uncommon to hear the prediction that if current policies are taken to their logical extreme, within five years Costa Rica will "Central Americanize"—become subject to the violent social and political conflict that afflicts its neighbors. If it does, those most responsible may well be the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the U.S. Agency for International Development (AID).

Change for the better? Most of the worries are about a government policy that began in 1986 and goes under the high-sounding title of "an agriculture of change." Briefly summarized, the "change" promoted by the Arias policy-makers is supposed to encourage large-scale Costa Rican farmers to grow specialty crops such as strawberries, macadamia nuts, melons and cut flowers for export to the U.S. At the same time, the government has been cutting subsidies and price supports to the small farmers who produce the nation's staples—corn, beans and rice—under the theory that the dollars earned from the new exports can be used to import cheap food from abroad.

One critic of the change from corn and beans to dollar crops is former President Rodrigo Carazo. "If this is the change they have in mind, I don't want any," says Carazo. Alluding to the drop in local bean production caused by the new policy, Carazo quips, "I haven't yet found a tortilla that I can eat along with dollars." Carazo, who served from 1978 to 1982, is a staunch defender of Third World food self-sufficiency.

In addition to criticizing their government, Carazo and other economic nationalists direct their fire at the international agencies that, in their view, have dictated the new approach in agriculture as one of the prices Costa Rica must pay for its foreign loans. They note that foreign lenders demand other concessions, including partial privatization of the country's banks and other public corporations considered pillars of the welfare-state system here.

In fact, the "agriculture of change" is part of a larger package that economists call "structural adjustment." In Costa Rica's case, the package seems to have been designed directly by the IMF and AID with assistance from Central Bank President Eduardo Lizano. (Some versions have Lizano in the designing and IMF-AID in the support role, but in practice it does not appear to make much difference.) The idea is to make the Costa Rican economy, starting with some farm products, internationally competitive, so that the country can pay off its \$4 billion foreign debt.



Many Costa Ricans fear President Arias' programs will "Central Americanize" their country.

Fate of 'Central American Switzerland' may be bleak

Unfortunately, the scheme spells potential disaster for Costa Rican peasants. Increasingly cut off from the credit and other assistance they need for production, many have been reduced to working for wages and planting just for their own subsistence, while others have lost their farms entirely. The first result is impoverishment. Farmers' leader Antonio Capella warns of political consequences to come: "A social explosion is in gestation. There is going to be a peasant eruption that will frighten people."

"Someplace to throw up a shack": Curiously, Capella himself is both a victim and a beneficiary of "agriculture for change." Once a large-scale rice grower, he has been forced to start growing a variety of squash called *ayote*, which he markets to Cuban-American buyers in Miami. But most of his cohorts have not made a successful transition; from 3,500 a few years ago, the ranks of Costa Rican rice farmers have dwindled to just about 500 today. According to Capella, many have filtered into the towns "looking for someplace to throw up a shack."

Faced with loss of their lands and homes and eventual migration to the cities, Costa Rican farmers are fighting back. Early this year, they created an umbrella group called the National Agricultural Sector Union (UNSA), whose 23 member organizations claim some 30,000 followers. After mounting large-scale marches in the capital in 1986 and 1987, the peasants upped the ante this past June, blocking highways and taking over municipal buildings in several areas to protest the "change."

Peasant leader Carlos Campos describes what happened in his area, a town called Guacimo in Costa Rica's Atlantic region: "We blocked the highway and the rail line, for seven days. We forced 800 Civil Guards to retire from the town, set up a new municipal council, and made the government listen to

us." The peasants' blockade was lifted only after Arias sent his wife, Margarita, to bargain with the striking farmers.

The vigor with which Campos and other groups have voiced their demands has brought the farmer-government conflict to

COSTA RICA

the edge of violence, without as yet touching off large-scale repression. So far, the Arias government's response to the peasants has been subtle. The government has set up commissions to negotiate agreements with the farmers—agreements the government later ignores. Meanwhile, official spokesmen like Interior Minister Hernán Garrón have tried to discredit peasant leaders with accusations that unnamed "leftists" and "communists"—maybe even Nicaragua's Sandinistas—are behind them. And, Campos charges, police have put protesting farmers' names on blacklists so that they are denied any credit at all in government banks.

The adjustment: With the government resorting to these kinds of tactics, the question now is whether the dispersed peasant groups can organize and unite quickly enough to stave off disaster. So far they have not achieved their goal of a major review of government policy, but, according to observers, have managed, by holding on in the countryside, to impede the IMF's economic adjustment. The IMF strategy requires them to

"There is going to be a peasant eruption that will frighten people," says a farm leader.

become wage-earners, driving down the cost of labor so that Costa Rican products can be sold more cheaply on world markets.

Will structural adjustment succeed, despite the farmers' resistance? Abelardo Morales, commentator for the magazine *Aportes*, believes that "the adjustment is already far advanced, more so than in any other Central American country." He notes that the neoliberal thinking behind the strategy is widely accepted among Costa Rica's urban middle class. But that doesn't mean the adjustment will work, even on its own terms.

One of the key weaknesses in the agriculture program is that specialty crop markets in the U.S. are likely to prove unreliable outlets for Costa Rican produce. Taking one example, Morales relates that after the government gave farmers in the Central Valley area subsidies to grow flowers for export, the U.S. Commerce Department accused them of dumping and slapped countervailing import duties on the *tico* carnations. Hundreds of prospective flower farmers now face financial ruin.

What is happening, however, is that, like many Third World countries, Costa Rica is becoming more dependent on food imports. The country already receives all the yellow corn it consumes from the U.S., and this year will import 25 percent of its rice, after years of rice surpluses in the early '80s. Though cheap now—because the cost is underwritten by a U.S. foreign food aid program—these imports are likely to create a heavy financial burden as time goes on.

Meanwhile, as Arias continues to dodge farmer protests, people in his own party increasingly worry about the longer-term political consequences of "structural adjustment." One concern is that in promoting the change in agriculture, the PLN may be committing political suicide. The small farmers now among its victims have been traditional PLN constituents, but are unlikely to go on voting for the party much longer if it keeps knocking the props out from under them.

Selling off sovereignty: People like former PLN Deputy Julio Jurado del Barco also decry the loss of their country's economic independence to foreign institutions that do not, in their view, have the best interests of Costa Rica at heart. Jurado is a leader in the current campaign to forestall IMF-backed privatization of the banks. Referring to the aid payoff the country will receive if a pending bank-reform bill is passed by Costa Rica's legislature, Jurado says, "The international agencies have put a price tag of \$200 million on our sovereignty."

With other nationalists, Jurado insists that AID has set up an illegal "parallel state" in Costa Rica, allowing AID to bypass local institutions that by law are supposed to oversee the hundreds of millions of dollars in economic support funds that the agency provides. When charges to this effect were made in June by former presidential adviser John Biehl, a Chilean citizen, Costa Rican financial groups benefiting from the AID largess pressed for, and got, Biehl's ouster.

But Jurado reserves his bluntest comment for the prospect of Costa Rica's coming "Central Americanization," a notion about which, he recognizes, opinions are divided. Said Jurado categorically, "The country will Central Americanize, because they want to do the adjustment brusquely and at the cost of those who need the state's protection. If we keep on this way, the matter is going to be resolved violently."

David R. Dye writes regularly for *In These Times* on Central America.

IN THESE TIMES NOV. 23-DEC. 6, 1988 11

By Kate Millpointer
with Preston J. Truman

Silent Sun

IT WAS QUIET. TOO QUIET. SOMETHING WAS TERRIBLY wrong with the birds.

For more than a decade David F. DeSante, a scientist at the Point Reyes Bird Observatory (PRBO) north of San Francisco, had studied the reproductive patterns of dozens of species of landbirds. But in late July 1986 he and his colleagues observed a disturbing phenomenon: an unprecedented number of birds were simply failing to reproduce. DeSante wanted to know why.

His search for an answer would lead him to a startling conclusion—one with implications far beyond his own field of ornithology. What DeSante determined about some birds in northern California may, in fact, offer insights into the fate of the Earth.

The roaring silence: Unlike most researchers, who typically concentrate on a single species, DeSante has monitored the reproductive success of 51 species of landbirds—which makes him a big-picture ornithologist.

"Usually," DeSante told *In These Times*, "when you walk down the net lanes in July there are flocks of punks [juvenile birds] and family groups of bushtits. Juvenile sparrows are collecting in little groups, and warblers are flying through the trees. The juveniles are squeaking and chirping, and some of the adults are singing."

But when he walked the net lanes on July 22, 1986, there was a striking change. Instead of the exhilarating breeding and feeding songs of adult birds and the squeaks and chirps of the young ones, he met an ominous silence.

"There were no young birds," he said. "And all the adults had stopped singing. I guess they had just given up."

From 1976 to 1985 the average daily capture for the month of July was more than 31 birds, and 60- and even 90-bird days were common, according to DeSante. In 1986 the breeding seasons started out in April auspiciously enough, and by May it promised to be better than usual.

Based on the higher-than-average rainfall California had received that winter, DeSante and his co-researchers expected a 10.4 percent increase in landbird productivity, or 110.4 percent of normal. Indeed, from May 10 to June 8—the first 30 days of the 100-day period, during which DeSante captured the juvenile birds that fledged three or four weeks earlier—the capture rate was 111.7 percent of normal.

But by mid-June, during the fourth of ten 10-day monitoring periods, the researchers noted that the number of netted birds was only 56 percent of the previous 10-year average. Such a decrease had never occurred before, but, according to DeSante, the researchers thought that the breeding season might have been delayed. Thus they dismissed this early indication that something was amiss, expecting to see a rapid improvement.

Instead, the numbers got worse—almost on a daily basis. By the eighth 10-day period in late July, productivity had dropped to only 24 percent of average. And this happened during a time when peak numbers of birds are usually captured.

Dismayed, DeSante and his co-workers conducted an arduous seven-week computer analysis of the captures of newly banded birds for the years 1976-86. They were immediately able to rule out pesticides, herbicides or other chemicals as probable causes of the low productivity, since no ap-



Sarah Shafer, a researcher at the Point Reyes Bird Observatory, removes a hummingbird from a mist-net.

plications were known to have occurred in the past 11 years within at least two kilometers of the area. And starvation evidently was not a factor, because the food supply appeared to be plentiful relative to recent productive years.

A deadly joke? "Nobody could think of anything to explain this," DeSante said. "So I said, as a joke, 'Well, it must have been Chernobyl,' and everyone just burst out laughing. Because when the Chernobyl fallout cloud passed over, and when it rained, the radio reports said that there was no reason to worry, and no reason even to wash the vegetables, because the amount of radiation was insignificant. So we didn't think about it anymore."

Acting on the hunch that he wasn't the only researcher witnessing the dwindling bird population, DeSante called Donald L. Dahlsten, who for more than two decades has conducted nesting-site, reproductive and life-span studies on Mountain and Chestnut-backed Chickadees at two study sites: Blodgett Forest in the western Sierras, and Modoc County, Calif., east of the Sierras.

When asked by DeSante about how his chickadees were doing, Dahlsten said he replied, "Funny you should ask, because this year Blodgett Forest has been a disaster, and we don't know why."

"We noticed something was wrong as soon as we saw the first nests," Dahlsten told *In These Times*. "There was a helluva mortality, and we could not figure it out.... It was the first time I had seen such a failure."

His data showed that Blodgett Forest nest failures were at a 15-year high, as were nest-

ling and egg mortality. Once again, pesticides and starvation were ruled out as factors in the unprecedented mortality spike.

Rain of terror: North of Eureka, Calif., at the Lamphere-Christiansen Nature Preserve, C.J. Ralph witnessed a 60-percent decrease in the White-crowned Sparrow, compared to the previous four years. An ornithologist and research scientist with the U.S. Forest Service, he has independently studied the breeding biology of White-crowned and Song Sparrows since 1982.

"We don't know if there was mortality, or lack of breeding success, but we didn't have as many juveniles to band in 1986," he told *In These Times*.

The reproductive failure may have affected western Oregon and Washington as well, since DeSante's preliminary data suggests that White-crowned Sparrows reproduced poorly in those states. And researchers at Harvey Monroe Hall Research Natural Area in the sub-alpine Sierras found flocks of up to only four juvenile juncos in 1986, compared to numerous flocks of from 30 to 150 during nine previous summers.

Yet curiously, Dahlsten's other study site—Modoc County in the far northeastern corner of California—showed reproductive numbers on the high side of normal, as did research data in the state's southern section. The only seeming variable was the heavy rain that had fallen on most of northern California on May 6, but had missed northeastern and southern California.

When DeSante re-examined his data in light of this weather report, some striking facts emerged.

The drastic reproductive decreases of

nearly every landbird species didn't start at the beginning of the breeding season; the capture rate for young birds early in the season was perfectly normal. But during the next 50 days, beginning on June 9, capture rates plummeted—from 56 percent of normal, to 42 percent, then 39 percent and, finally, in the eighth period of late July, to only 24 percent of normal.

Thus the researchers determined that the onset of the reproductive failure must have occurred around May 10-15, because the first decreases in young birds netted were noted three to four weeks later. Clearly, something unusual had happened in the early part of May—but what? DeSante and his co-researchers studied their data again.

According to DeSante, one of the researchers said, "That is when the Chernobyl cloud was passing over. So let's really take a look at this."

This time nobody laughed when Chernobyl was mentioned.

The food-war hypothesis: When they categorized the species according to migratory behavior, habitat preference and nest location, the researchers found that the decreases were independent of those factors. But when they classified the species according to foraging behavior, they discovered a puzzling anomaly: the only species *not* affected were woodpeckers and swallows.

At first they could not understand why these particular species were exempt. But knowledge of avian diets provided a clue. DeSante's team knew that woodpeckers feed their young on grubs and beetles, which, in turn, feed on dying, dead and decomposing wood. Swallows feed their young on flying

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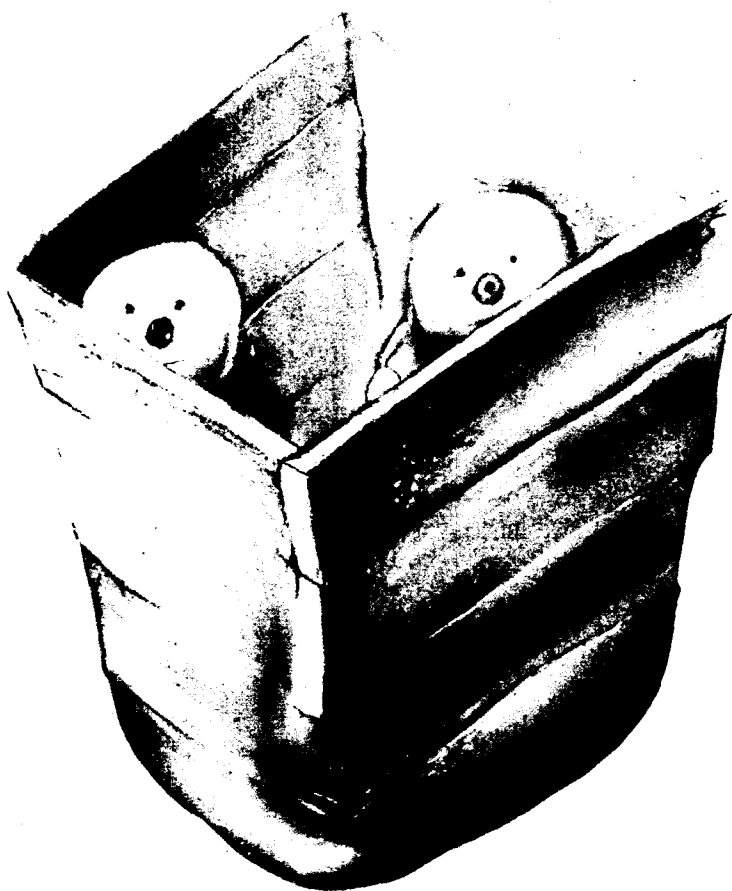


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David F. DeSante wanted to know why the birds had stopped singing in the summer of 1986.

His search for an answer would lead him to a startling conclusion—one with implications far beyond his own field of ornithology.

insects, which, in the vicinity of PRBO, primarily emerge from flowing water in small creeks that contain decomposing materials.

So whatever had affected the majority of the birds at the observatory appeared to involve the primary production food chain, or food web—such as caterpillars and other lar-

vae that eat new plant growth, and are, in turn, eaten by many bird species. DeSante's explanation as to how Chernobyl fallout could have spurred infant and juvenile bird mortality is based on the fact that radioactive contaminants become increasingly concentrated as they move up the food chain.

A potent example of this "transfer factor," which measures the amount of radiation transferred and concentrated in the food web, is that fish that feed on algae and ocean sediments have been found to concentrate radionuclides to levels far surpassing the amounts found in the water in which they live.

So it would follow that woodpeckers and swallows—which feed on insects that in turn feed on dead and decaying wood and vegetation, which absorbs no rainwater and hence no iodine-131, the primary radioactive isotope found in North American Chernobyl fallout—would be the least affected. In fact, those birds showed no decline at all. However, other insectivorous birds showed declines of 63 to 65 percent. Foods such as caterpillars and other insect larvae are important sources of forage for the Warbling Vireo and Black-headed Grosbeaks, which suffered a complete reproductive failure in the vicinity of PRBO in 1986. Seed-eaters showed a decline of about 50 percent. Circumstantial evidence was strong for DeSante's food-web hypothesis.

The effects of iodine-131 are well-documented in sheep, cattle, swine and humans, but no comparable studies have been conducted on birds. The isotope, which has a half-life of eight days and a full radioactive life of 160 days, tends to accumulate in the thyroid, where it proceeds to disrupt the production of vital body-regulating hormones. This can result in health problems ranging from reproductive problems, hypothyroidism and mental retardation to respiratory problems and lowered immune system response. DeSante believes that ingestion of the isotope may have similar effects on birds.

This opinion is not shared by I. Lehr Brisbin, senior staff scientist at the Savannah River Ecology Laboratory (SREL). The lab is located on land where nuclear reactors at the Savannah River Plant have been secretly releasing radiation for three decades. For example, in 1956, 1,576 curies of iodine-131 were released from the plant without public notice. By way of comparison, Three Mile Island's nuclear power plant released about 14 curies of iodine-131 in 1979.

The "weather thing": "I would be orienting toward a weather thing," Brisbin told *In These Times*. "There is no question in my mind that something happened," yet he said he remained skeptical of the Chernobyl hypothesis.

But even a cursory examination of weather records and bird productivity data for the past decade at PRBO and other bird observatories that noted a decline in landbirds reveals that a "weather thing" in 1986 was not the cause. However, the reproductive failures did coincide geographically with the rain associated with the passage of the May 6, 1986, Chernobyl cloud over coastal Washington, Oregon and northern California. No past heavy spring rains, the most severe drought of the century in 1976-77 or other unusual weather conditions, such as the 1982-83 El Nino winter of excessive rainfall, produced such severe effects on PRBO landbird productivity as seen in the summer of 1986. These events resulted in only a 19 percent to 32 percent decline, compared to a 62.5 percent reduction in 1986 at PRBO, according to DeSante.

Brisbin said that SREL twice analyzed 34 dead birds—representing 16 species that DeSante recovered during the 1986 banding operation—and found that they were "completely clean" of any radioactive isotopes, although he refused to release the test results to *In These Times*.

It is not surprising that Brisbin's tests did

not detect the short-lived iodine-131, because his tests were conducted more than a year after the birds died. But Brisbin said that no cesium-137, which has a half-life of 30 years and a full radioactive life of 600 years, was detected either. He said this proves that iodine-131 could not be implicated in the bird deaths since "it is absolutely physically impossible for the iodine-131 to fall from the sky without the cesium." Thus he believes that iodine-131 could not have caused any problems.

"The bottom line," Brisbin stressed, "is that whether it is xenon, plutonium or iodine, or any isotope, it is impossible for the fallout to get into the food web and into the bird without some cesium showing up. Cesium is the most ubiquitous, the easiest detected, and would be selectively taken up and stored in the skeletal muscles. Now we're talking about 35 years worth of study on this very same process—how radioactive contaminants cycle through the environment and food chains—here at the Savannah River Plant."

But Brisbin's explanation leaves much unexplained. Although a score of short- and long-lived radionuclides were detected over Paris on April 29, 1986, three days after the accident began, the composition of the Chernobyl fallout varied as the reactor core continued to burn for 10 more days. Japanese scientists noted in the June 1986 issue of the British journal *Nature* that "the highest concentrations of radioactivity, to which iodine-131 was the chief contributor, were found in the samples collected between May 5 and 10, and persisted for several days."

No one knows for sure how much iodine-131 fell on northern California during the Chernobyl fallout because the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) did not monitor there. However, in cities such as Portland, Ore., and Olympia and Spokane, Wash., similar in climate to northern California, samples showed high levels of iodine-131 in the rain from May 5-22, 1986. The highest level of

Continued on page 22

British bird data shows similar trend

British ornithologists may have unwittingly witnessed the aftereffects of Chernobyl on many varieties of birds as late as the summer of 1987. Without attributing the cause to Chernobyl, the British Trust for Ornithology reported in the March/April 1988 issue of the *British Trust News* that the number of adult birds caught in 1987 at 63 sites in Great Britain and Ireland was much lower than in 1986, and that the number of captured young birds in 1987 was much greater than that of the previous year.

Ornithologist David F. DeSante, formerly of the Point Reyes Bird Observatory, said that these findings were "perfectly analogous" to the 1987 landbird data he and his co-researchers collected. "Their results were not as severe as ours, but it shows exactly the same trend," he said. "We also captured relatively few adults birds in 1987. This was to be expected, of course, because so few young were produced in 1986."

Although the number of birds netted last summer by DeSante and his co-workers was higher than that of 1986 and 1987, the ornithologist said he doesn't expect the adult birds to achieve their pre-1986 population levels until 1990 or 1991.

—K.M.

EDITORIAL

Bill Day Detroit Free Press
Phone 864-5000



The PLO provides a clear basis for peace

For several years Yassir Arafat and other moderate leaders of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) have indicated that they would recognize Israel and coexist with it peacefully, if Israel would reciprocate by agreeing to meet with the Palestinians and negotiate a two-state solution to their hostilities. A succession of Israeli governments have, of course, refused these overtures. Despite mounting evidence to the contrary, they have branded Palestinian attempts at a peaceful solution to their 40-year war as subterfuge designed to mask the PLO's continuing commitment to the destruction of the Israeli state. Successive American administrations have followed suit, accepting Israel's characterization of the PLO as a terrorist organization, and averring that they would never deal with terrorists.

For their part, Arafat and other PLO leaders until recently lacked sufficient support among member groups within the organization to move unilaterally. Arafat and his supporters have long made it plain that they were ready to accept UN Security Council Resolution 242, which implicitly affirms Israel's right to "secure and recognized" borders, and Resolution 338, which calls for negotiations to achieve them—but only if Israel first recognized the PLO as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. So, the PLO line was no recognition of Israel until its leaders were willing to negotiate with the Palestinians, while from the Israeli side it was no consideration of negotiations unless the PLO conceded recognition in advance.

For rejectionists on both sides this was a convenient impasse, a Catch-22 that enabled them—almost endlessly—to avoid facing reality and coming to terms with it. But, for the Palestinians, though clearly not yet the Israelis, this year's uprising on the West Bank and in the Gaza strip—the *intifada*—has changed all that.

A new reality: The *intifada* has greatly strengthened the PLO, and the moderates within it. First, the uprising has made it inescapably clear that the vast majority of Palestinians see the PLO as their only legitimate representative. Second, the non-violent, highly disciplined nature of the *intifada* has obviated the need for the kind of terrorist actions favored by the PLO's rejectionist wing.

The uprising has demonstrated beyond serious question that the Palestinian people will never accept Israeli domination of the West

Bank and Gaza. This, in turn, has given the PLO greatly enhanced international prestige and respect—except, unfortunately, within Israel. Now the rest of the world knows that there must be a Palestinian state in the Occupied Territories, and that—initially at least—the PLO will lead and represent it.

Given the new reality created by the *intifada*, it was logical that the Palestine National Council (PNC) would now find a majority of its members ready not only to proclaim the existence of an independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital, but also finally to accept a 1947 UN resolution that partitioned Palestine between Arabs and Jews. That resolution had been characterized as "null and void" by the PNC in Article 19 of its 1968 covenant, but was accepted at last week's meeting in Algiers as the framework for proposed peace talks with Israel. In addition, the political document adopted by the national council said that resolutions 242 and 338 should be the basis of negotiations for a peaceful settlement.

These proclamations represent an unmistakable victory for PLO moderates. It is an offer that begs for a positive response from those who claim to oppose rejectionism and to desire an end to hostilities. It was to be expected that the Israeli government would reject these moves by the Palestinians out of hand. The conservative Likud Party and its orthodox allies do not intend to return the territories captured in the 1967 war, and the Labor Party is terrified of being considered soft on the PLO. Arafat did not expect openness from the Israelis, which is why he has appealed to president-elect George Bush to initiate negotiations between Israel, the PLO and the major powers. "This could be the season of peace if the U.S. administration and Israel wish it," Arafat said in Algiers. But now "the ball is in the American court."

Nothing new on our side: Both the State Department and the Bush transition team have reacted predictably to the PLO proclamation. Having little alternative, they have welcomed it as a step forward but have also repeated the old rejectionist formula: The PLO must unambiguously recognize Israel by unconditionally accepting resolutions 242 and 338 and must reject all military actions before negotiations can begin for a Mideast peace settlement. In other words, Bush is calling on the PLO to give up its last remaining bargaining chips before negotiating. He wants them to disarm unilaterally.

This position could only be taken by someone not interested in a peaceful and equitable settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian war. It is particularly unworthy of a new administration coming to power with an opportunity to chart a new course.

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WORLD
PEACE

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LETTERS

A single standard

LIKE HENRY KISSINGER, EDWARD LEVY ("LETTERS," Oct. 26) wishes the U.S. news media to de-emphasize discussion of the Israeli repression of the *intifada* in the Occupied Territories. In Levy's case it's the analysts on the left he wishes to discourage, and in order to leverage his position as a critic of the left, he claims to support a Palestinian homeland and to believe that "some of the criticisms leveled at Israel...are valid," without specifying which ones.

In his accusation of a double standard on the left, Levy asks a series of rhetorical questions that he seems to think are unanswerable. But as examples of a double standard, they in fact turn into their opposite on closer examination. Take, for example, his query, "What would we have heard if it had been Israel instead of Iraq who used poison gas on its Kurdish citizens?" What in fact has been the reaction in this case? According to *Congressional Quarterly*, in early September the Senate passed harsh economic sanctions against Iraq on a voice vote less than 24 hours after senior members of the Foreign Relations Committee introduced the measure. Later in the month, the House passed a weaker measure. A reconciliation between the two bills needs to be made, but at least there has been legislative deliberation and action.

By way of contrast, consider what happened to aid to Israel after the revelation of, to put it mildly, recent Israeli human rights abuses. After Shatila and Sabra, the U.S. "punished" Israel by actually increasing aid to the country. And currently the Reagan administration is proposing to increase aid to Israel by exactly the amount that it is costing to repress the *intifada*.

Israel is unique in the amount of foreign aid it receives from the U.S. and in the lack of accountability for that aid. To demand a superficially equilibrated scale of criticism for all incidents of human rights abuse does nothing but mute and paralyze effective criticism of that abuse which we as taxpayers have the most control over. If Levy or others have been lobbying Congress for a single "yardstick for human rights," they've been fairly ineffective. When the U.S. Senate proceeds with such alacrity on economic sanctions against Israel as it did against Iraq, then the American left will know that it can let up in its alleged over-emphasis on the repression in the Occupied Territories.

Jeffrey Larson
Hamden, Conn.

Bad people

IN SUSAN J. DOUGLAS' ARTICLE ON THE FEEBLE Dukakis campaign (*ITT*, Oct. 26), liberalism is defined correctly and defended admirably as meaning "tolerant, broad-minded, marked by generosity." However, "speaking through" the Dud, I mean the Duke, Douglas describes these as being "all very admirable and very American traits."

After eight years of Reagan worship and the "success" of the ludicrous Bush-Quayle campaign, can we truthfully describe the traits of liberalism as being "very American"? Perhaps some of us in Reagan's America who see through the phony mass media and America's conservative fakelore should come to the conclusion that

America is not, never was, and never will be what we would like it to be.

It seems to me that "liberals" are bogey-men in Reagan's America because the majority of Americans are intolerant, small-minded and marked by ungenerosity. The traits ascribed to "conservatives"—greed, intolerance and love of special privilege—flourish in the U.S. because Americans are mostly ultraconservative people.

"Striking it rich," power, privilege—these are nearest and dearest to the hearts and minds of Americans. As for tolerance, Americans are tolerant of Pentagon contractors who spend taxpayer money on servants and country club dues, but talk about food stamps or aid to the homeless and other liberal heresies, and Americans become very intolerant indeed. Ask "card-carrying members of the ACLU" about American "tolerance," and American Indians about American "generosity."

The fact is that America is a greedy, grubby nation of anti-liberal yahoos and usurpers. The Reaganite usurpers know their yahoo audience; Bush, Quayle and the right wing have "won."

"The people" will give no further trouble.

Nigel Smith
Ridgewood, New Jersey

Suspicious

I'M GLAD THAT *IN THESE TIMES* HAS FINALLY SUBJECTED the New Alliance Party to an analysis of their questionable background and practices, exposing their many contradictions and their deceit (*ITT*, Nov. 2). My first encounters with these people five years ago left me very suspicious of their systematic manipulation, and subsequent experiences have only confirmed these impressions.

In 1986 I worked as a precinct captain for the re-election of state Rep. John E. McDonough, one of the most progressive voices in the Massachusetts legislature. I remember some of the misrepresentations of his opponent, NAP's Cathy Stewart. A flier, "A Woman and a Rainbow," led voters I spoke with to the erroneous conclusion that the Rainbow Coalition was endorsing her.

Such tactics seem to be NAP's stock in trade. Boston's *Gay Community News* recently quoted one of their candidates as saying that "we never knew that 'The Rainbow' was owned by anybody." Several days ago I walked past their local headquarters, located next to a largely black and Hispanic housing project and noticed a sign in the window strongly implying that Jesse Jackson was not supporting Dukakis. This is a very divisive group attempting to exploit people's ideals with progressive-sounding

rhetoric and a multiplicity of front organizations.

NAP has emerged in recent years, seemingly from nowhere, to foist unknown "leaders" upon us. (Interestingly, they like to run candidates against incumbent progressives, and their campaigns are often quite negative.) They seem to be most visible in the black and gay communities, presumably because there they see organized discontent to manipulate for their own ends.

Their stated estimation of their own importance is ludicrous: several years ago their newspaper, *The National Alliance*, touted NAP as "the conscience of the gay Democratic clubs," and it once falsely claimed NAP was "the only militant contingent" in a Boston Gay Pride March.

Topping it all off, *The National Alliance* is an expensive, professionally produced newspaper that is distributed free all over the place. One wonders: where does their money come from? Who is supporting them? Their background and behavior are suspicious, to say the least.

John Kyper
Roxbury, Mass.

Who profits?

DIANE CAROL BAST ("LETTERS," NOV. 2) CRITICIZES Deborah Davis' "Prisons for Profit" because Davis wrongly attributes "public spiritedness" to government officials. In truth, claims Bast, such officials are as motivated by profit as are private-sector managers, except that they—the bureaucrats—profit from mismanagement and the larger budgets needed to pay for it, while private officials "profit when they perform well."

Even casual readers of the financial and business press will be surprised to learn that in the private sector profits are a reward for efficiency. Mergers and leveraged buyouts have been generating colossal profits—and attracting resources and energies away from real investment and productivity improvement. On a more "everyday" level, high profit rates are generally associated with giant corporations that control major shares of their product markets, not with efficient operations.

If Bast really wants to know why government budgets expand (when they do expand faster than private-sector spending), she might be advised to junk "public choice" theory as a right-wing diversion. A more plausible reason is that private profit-maximizing firms have every incentive to externalize their costs—to dump as much of their "bads" on the community at large as they can, in the form of pollution and environmental rape, urban decay, industrial

dislocation and unemployment, on-the-job injury and disability, traffic congestion and more. Government is left to clean up the mess, and to struggle to come up with the necessary tax revenues in the face of understandable citizen resistance.

More than that, when private companies do function efficiently, their reward can be higher sales and profits, along with an expansion of labor and capital resources at their disposal. In the non-military public sector, this outcome is anything but certain. A public enterprise that operates efficiently is likely to be targeted for special hostility and attack. After all, what could be more threatening for conservatives than a clear-cut demonstration that private enterprise causes serious social and economic problems and that public enterprise is reasonably effective in solving them?

There is one sector of government to which "public choice" theory does apply—the Pentagon, the largest single enterprise in the economy. For some reason "public choice" theorists seem to be unconcerned with it.

Richard B. Du Boff
Bryn Mawr, Pa.

Being serious

ONE REGRETS THAT *IN THESE TIMES* COVERS ONLY the Democratic and Republican candidates for president and vice president, even though parties of the left (for example, the Socialist Party, Socialist Workers Party and Workers World) are all running presidential and vice presidential candidates. This lack of coverage seems strange for a newspaper supposedly committed to socialism. By not covering left candidates, *In These Times* has all the more reinforced the false view that only the two capitalist party candidates in any election are worthy of serious attention.

Joseph D. Zumbo
Albany, NY

Editor's Note: We did also run a piece on Dr. Lenora Fulani's campaign as a National Alliance Party candidate, but the fact is that the Republican and Democratic presidential candidates were the only ones worthy of serious attention because they were the only serious candidates. We believe that the various sect parties that Joseph Zumbo mentions are engaged in token rituals, not politics.

Correction

The photograph of Michael Dukakis on the cover of Vol. 13, No. 2 lost its credit. It should have read: ©1988 Les Stone/Impact Visuals. Our apologies to the photographer.

SYLVIA

the Sylvia
School of
Writing
Bonus phrase:
"CRITICAL
MASS"

Students, PLEASE complete this THANKSGIVING STORY:

JIM started it by ASKING, "Did you put ACORNS in the STUFFING?" then BETTY SMIRKED AND SAID, "I THINK it's BOTTLE CAPS." SOON NEGATIVE COMMENTS RESOUNDED AROUND the TABLE. WHEN they REACHED CRITICAL MASS, I...

by Nicole Hollander



By Max Gordon

A RECENT "VIEWPOINT" BY JEROLD M. Starr (ITT, Sept. 7) informs us of courses on the Vietnam War now being prepared for colleges and high schools. According to the article, the recommended text is Stanley Karnow's *Vietnam: A History*, billed by Karnow as the "first complete account of Vietnam at war." It is a companion to a recent 13-part PBS television series on the war.

Karnow's 750-page account is detailed and reasonably objective. But he and other writers on the war have missed a critical aspect of the story. The war is perceived by most people as beginning in 1961 with the large-scale introduction of military "advisers" and combat troops by President John F. Kennedy. But a civil war, between southern Vietnamese and a force created and guided by the CIA, had been raging long before Kennedy sent the first 10,000 "advisers" to the south that year. In fact the United States entered the war in 1954, and Washington sired an illegitimate birth that created South Vietnam. This background merits inclusion in the materials being prepared for academia.

In July 1954—after eight years of France's futile efforts to reconquer its prewar Indochinese colonies, with the U.S. paying the bulk of the cost at the end—a conference at Geneva negotiated a peace providing for three independent nations, Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam. The last was temporarily zoned for purposes of the truce, but an election for a Vietnam-wide government was

U.S.-sired birth of South Vietnam still obscured

set for July 1956. As President Dwight D. Eisenhower later admitted in his memoir, *Mandate for Change*, "perhaps 80 percent" of all Vietnamese then supported the communist leader Ho Chi Minh.

At the Geneva conference the U.S. representative, Undersecretary of State Walter Bedell Smith, pledged that the United States would "refrain from the threat or use of force to disturb [the conference agreements] in accordance with...the Charter of the United Nations dealing with the obligation of members to refrain...from the threat or use of force..." He added that the U.S. hoped the agreements would "permit Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam to play their part in full independence and sovereignty." It would thus appear indisputable that the U.S. officially accepted the unitary character of Vietnam, pledged that it would not disrupt its territorial integrity, and agreed that any such effort was lawless under the United Nations' charter.

The double cross: Yet two days after the U.S. gave that pledge, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles told the press that Geneva advanced "the truly independent status of Cambodia, Laos and southern Vietnam." The world then knew that Washing-

ton intended to ignore the Geneva accords, close its eyes to international law and dishonor its pledge. Karnow and other writers on the war appear to have missed this declaration of lawless intent, as well as some other key aspects of the story.

Most nations were anxious to have the Geneva accords prevail. Soon after Dulles' press statement, Australia wired the U.N. proposing membership for Laos and Cambodia, but noted pointedly, "At this stage there is no government in Vietnam which could accept the [U.N. Charter] obligation...on behalf of the whole territory and population of Vietnam." At the U.N. General Assembly meeting that fall, and again in 1955, nation after nation hailed establishment of *three* Indochinese nations. But so great was U.S. power at that time, and so unscrupulous was the Eisenhower administration in using that power, that some nations knuckled under.

Years later Lt. Gen. James Gavin, Army Chief of Plans in 1954, told the *New York Times* that Eisenhower had hoped to set up an independent South Vietnam. "The fact that this was contrary to the Geneva accords," he said, "seemed somehow irrelevant." The irrelevance cost millions of Indochinese lives, shattered three societies, killed nearly 60,000 Americans, and disrupted the lives of hundreds of thousands more.

The partition: Following the Geneva conference, southern Vietnamese who had fought the French were zoned to the north, presumably until the mandated 1956 unification elections, and a U.S.-approved administrator, Ngo Dinh Diem, took over in the south under CIA direction. President Eisenhower moved quickly to split Vietnam permanently, promising and providing aid to Diem in setting up an independent South Vietnam. Presidents Kennedy and Johnson later referred to this promise as a binding commitment. Thus was "South Vietnam" born—and with it the myth that the United States fought to defend it from "North Vietnamese aggression."

Not until 1959, three years after the U.S. and Diem had blocked the elections and the rezoned southern troops were supposed to have returned home, did Hanoi begin to send them home. Civil war had by then been raging for two years, as Diem tried to subjugate a recalcitrant people. The civil war had been preceded in 1955 by a reign of terror waged by Diem against southerners who had earlier fought the French. Tens of thousands were executed or jailed.

Initially, there was little organized resistance as Ho supporters waited for the elections. But by 1957 they were fighting back and John Mecklin, director of U.S. Information Services in Saigon, confessed that the Diem regime "was a sorry match for the Viet Cong in a struggle where the decision would go to the side that could win the people."

Throughout the war, both U.S. and Saigon officials repeatedly confessed that popular

allegiance belonged to the Viet Cong, the communist-led military. As examples, Maj. Gen. Edward Lansdale, who as CIA chief in Vietnam was Diem's intimate adviser, declared in an October 1964 *Foreign Affairs* article that the Viet Cong "is embedded within the population" and drew its support from the people, whereas the Saigon regime "depends on the bureaucracy and the army." In an April 7, 1968, *Time* magazine report, correspondent Jack Langguth reported that the Saigon regime feared negotiations because, as its leaders admitted, they could not match the National Liberation Front (NLF)—the communist-led political organization in the south—in open elections. Langguth declared that the NLF had for years constituted the de facto government over four-fifths of South Vietnam's territory. Robert W. Komer, U.S. civilian chief of pacification, estimated late in 1967 that 10 million of South Vietnam's 17 million people lived in areas governed wholly or partly by the NLF.

Addressing a World Quaker Conference in July 1967, U.N. Secretary-General U Thant—who had tried tirelessly to end the war—cited the U.S. intervention as an example of the failure of U.N. members to refrain from the threat or use of force as demanded by the U.N. Charter. The war would end, he declared, when the U.S. recognized that the Vietnamese were fighting not as "communist aggressors," but for national independence.

The final act of the war was also accompanied by treaty violations characteristic of Washington's conduct throughout. The Paris peace pact of 1973, which formally ended the war, provided for Saigon and the Provisional Revolutionary Government (PRG)—set up to govern the Viet Cong-controlled territory—to organize a Council of National Reconciliation that was to prepare elections for South Vietnam. Both sides were to release their political prisoners and remove all restrictions on movement, free speech, press, political demonstrations and political activity.

From the outset the Saigon regime made it clear it had no intention to free its political prisoners (estimated by the PRG to number 3 million), to allow any freedom of movement or speech, or to allow the peasantry herded into Saigon to go back to the countryside, largely governed by the PRG. In fact, it decreed that anyone informing people that the peace pact allowed them to return to their farms would be shot.

The Saigon government also made no move toward formation of a reconciliation council, which meant no move toward elections. It sought to maintain the power position it had held under U.S. military protection throughout the war, though incapable of holding it militarily by itself. After two years of stalling, Saigon was stormed by 300,000 combined North Vietnamese and PRG forces and was routed, though defended presumably by a million regular and reserve troops. Washington, of course, promptly charged violation of the peace treaty and sought to punish Hanoi in various ways. In the light of the lawlessness and duplicity of the U.S. war of aggression and the resulting fearful suffering and destruction, the U.S. surely owes Vietnam massive reparations.

Max Gordon is a retired journalist living in Florida.

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It Hurt a Little

There were moments of pain on election night, but I can't say the defeat of Michael Dukakis was one of them. I felt bad that Mayor Bernie Sanders of Burlington, Vt., missed by a very few percentage points being the first independent member of Congress—non-Democrat, non-Republican—in a very long time. At first the returns from Burlington made it look as though he had a shot. But all too soon the tide began to turn, as results came in from the rest of the state. As one of his supporters mournfully remarked, Bernie won the workers, but he lost the peasants.

I felt bad, too, about Sen. Lowell Weicker (R-CT), beaten by a Democrat who supported contra aid and who prospered by an endorsement from William F. Buckley. Like fellow Republican Sen. Mark Hatfield of Oregon, Weicker has guts. I felt terrible about the victory of Connie Mack, the biggest swine in Congress and now the junior senator-elect from Florida, at the expense of Buddy MacKay, who was no prize but better than Mack. Mack was, as you may recall, the man who told Ben Linder's mother in a congressional hearing that her son had it coming to him when he was killed by the contras. And I felt bad about the Senate defeat of Mike Lowry in Washington state by Slade Gorton. These were all narrow margins and in each case God, as he so often does just to show who's in charge, told the archangel to make it near and yet so far.

Bush and El Salvador

The new phase somehow reminds me of the mid-'50s, with a relatively moderate and intellectually unimaginative president flanked by a crazy No. 2. For Nixon read Dan Quayle, and talk about history coming back again as farce.

Of course, this comfortable view of the future could be rudely dispelled by some sudden unpleasant episode, like Bush ordering U.S. forces into El Salvador next spring. It seems unlikely that Bush will make any serious effort to persuade Congress to revive contra aid. Why lose a vote and diminish his already modest credibility with Congress? But El Salvador is a different matter. Sadly, there remains a bipartisan consensus on shoveling aid to El Salvador to prop up the military/civilian *camarilla* presided over by the increasingly enfeebled Duarte.

The situation in El Salvador is extremely fluid. The FMLN has been achieving significant successes and embarrassing the army in San Salvador itself. A new contingent of officers taking over the army flirts with the notion of a coup d'état and total war rather than "low-intensity conflict" advocated by U.S. advisers. "Total war" would mean the frenzied bloodletting of the early '80s, politically unpopular with Congress as the press here would make a major issue of it. Roberto d'Aubuisson's ARENA Party has evolved a social-fascist program using much of the rhetoric of the left, and is campaigning under these colors to considerable effect.

One representative of the FMLN confessed to me candidly in the last week that Arena's propaganda was much better—"less windy"—than his own movement's.

Meanwhile, the Christian Democrats are trying to reconsolidate as Duarte moves

from the scene. Both Guillermo Ungo and Ruben Zamora, political leaders in the FDR portion of the FMLN-FDR alliance, are now campaigning in El Salvador, and it is possible that their paths could, in the event of a favorable reception at the polls next March, diverge from the FMLN's. The FMLN is boycotting the elections as a fraudulent process and studying its own options, including an insurrectionary strategy.

The potential exists, though not necessarily the likelihood, for a sudden worsening of the situation from the U.S. point of view: major gains by the FMLN, most obviously. In such a situation Bush might behave rather as did Anthony Eden in 1956, when, as prime minister after many years of being Winston Churchill's second in command, he suddenly felt the need to demonstrate "resolve" and embarked on the mad Suez adventure that ruined him.

Apocalypse Now?

Other soothsayers of chaos in the Bush years predict that the economy, inflated by debt, sluggishly tumid, will finally explode. Again, this is possible but far from inevitable. The economic expansion—admittedly at a low rate of growth—is six years old this month, which is three years over the norm for a business-cycle upswing, if you average the graphs of the past hundred years.

Only two upturns have lasted longer—from 1938 to 1945 and from 1961 to 1969. These were both periods of war, giving one the clue to the Reagan expansion: military spending as a stabilizer of the economy. So long as Bush does not do anything foolish, like cut the \$300 billion defense budget, disaster may stay at arm's length.

Meanwhile, the political battle will be over the nature of the Democratic Party of which Jesse Jackson has convincing claims to be the legitimate leader, a fact well attested by the attacks being launched on him by such columnists as George Will and William Safire. Particularly in the South it

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has become clear that the "Reagan Democrats" sought in vain by Dukakis have gone forever, a good thing since they can no longer pursue their historic function as a permanent fifth column.

There will be efforts to drag the stake from the corpse and say that Dukakis alone let the party down, and that a truly eloquent Mario Cuomo would have led it to victory. Given the economic news noted above, this is not an irrefutable proposition. Dukakis was preposterously incompetent, but his fence-straddling on who he was and what

ASHES & DIAMONDS

By Alexander Cockburn

he believed in at least had the merit of being a truthful representation of the schizoid nature of a party occupied (and financed) by businessmen and simultaneously inhabited by Jackson's left/liberal followers. Perhaps in this next cycle it will break asunder, though the arrival of a smooth-tongued bonesetter such as Cuomo—or Jackson himself, for that matter—should not be underestimated.

At all events, both inside the party and most importantly to its left, with the creation of fresh activist coalitions, there is plenty of political space in which to work.

Victories That Count

Think globally, act locally. One of my favorite newspaper editors extinguished a growth movement in local fascism with some spirited journalism. In Mendocino County in northern California, Jack Azevedo was running in the fourth supervisorial district for the county board. The county supervisors have real power, over schools, social spending and so forth.

On October 12 Bruce Anderson, editor of the *Anderson Valley Advertiser*, disclosed to his readers a list Azevedo had once given him naming the several score people—many of them public figures—he, Azevedo, had deemed potential child molesters. They included, in Azevedo's demented lexicon, Jews, Masons and followers of Satan. Many were furious to be thus publicly listed in

the *Advertiser*, even though the list was evidence of the true political nature of a man who was at that point well ahead in the polls. A week later Anderson followed up with news of Azevedo's revisionist theses regarding the Nazis' extermination of the Jews.

"How dangerous is he?" Anderson asked in his editorial, and answered, "It's hard to say. As an individual he's too dumb to be very dangerous, but as a point man for other persons, much more sophisticated persons, he is at least smart enough to do their work for them."

Anderson pointed out that big-timber interests in the county—Louisiana Pacific and Georgia Pacific—were keen to see Azevedo win. No matter if a man says the Nazis were framed, just so long as he endorses clear-cutting and gives business all the breaks he can.

By election day the voters knew what was going on. The *Advertiser* is widely read in Mendocino County. Azevedo lost to a perfectly decent liberal, Liz Henry. On such victories or defeats turn the political complexions of counties, of states and finally of nations. If every county in the country had such a fierce paper as the *Advertiser*—rooted in local affairs—with an editor prepared to write simple, clear advice to readers and ready to take a lot of heat for being "tasteless" or "out of step with local realities," we could see a radical Congress in a generation. Anderson, by the way, is appealing a two-month jail sentence for "disturbing the peace" in a fracas with another noted pig in Mendocino County, educational board superintendent Jim Spence.

"We Republicans understand the bondage between parent and child."—Dan Quayle = "Facts are stupid things."—Ronald Reagan = "We need the female vote. He'll do the trick. He's very cute."—Montana delegate Sharon Estrada on Dan Quayle = "Boy, they were big on crematoriums, weren't they?"—George Bush on flashwits = "I think we should keep the grain and export the farmers."—Ronald Reagan = "One problem that we've had...is the people who are sleeping on the grates, the homeless, who are homeless, you might say, by choice."—Ronald Reagan on Good Morning, America, 1/31/84 = "The proper role of a mother with a child two years old is to devote herself to that child."—Sen. George Humphrey (R-NH) = "We looked [President Reagan] right across the eyes."—Dan Quayle = "[You don't] have to go to college to achieve success. We need the people to do the hard physical work."—George Bush to Hispanic high school students in East Los Angeles = "Whatever you want I'm for."—Dan Quayle to farmers = "There's no difference between me and the President on taxes. No more pickin' up ah-dee-de-deh."—Dan Quayle to the races. = "George Bush = "There is nothing that a good defense cannot beat a better offense. In other words a good offense wins."—Dan Quayle = "Cariboo like the [Alaskan] pipeline. They lean up against it, have a lot of babies, scratch on it. There's more damn cariboo than you can shake a stick at."—George Bush = "Boy, they were big on crematoriums, weren't they?"—George Bush on flashwits = "I think we should keep the grain and export the farmers."—Ronald Reagan = "One problem that we've had...is the people who are sleeping on the grates, the homeless, who are homeless, you might say, by choice."—Ronald Reagan on Good Morning, America, 1/31/84 = "We looked [President Reagan] right across the eyes."—Dan Quayle = "Facts are stupid things."—Ronald Reagan = "We need the female vote. He'll do the trick. 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Mona Lisa Overdrive

By William Gibson
Bantam, 260 pp., \$17.95

By James Hynes

Robot's rules of disorder: Cyberpunk rocks the boat

BEWARE OF LITERARY MOVEMENTS sporting manifestoes. Before you know it, the reading of the work itself becomes subsumed in an increasingly useless debate about the movement and what it stands for. Attention is gradually diverted from the original authors to critics and academics arguing whether a given individual work is part of the movement. Indeed, by this point the movement is declared over, both by its creators and by its detractors.

In this scheme of things, cyberpunk is as good as dead. Coined to describe William Gibson's startling novel *Neuromancer*, the term "cyberpunk" refers to a controversial movement in science fiction. Cyberpunk novels and stories feature Chanderlesque plots and a frightening milieu of urban decay and corporate hegemony. They show a fascination for the intersection of street life (i.e., sex, drugs and violence) with the new information technology.

From the publication of *Neuromancer* in 1984 until the recent release of Gibson's third novel, *Mona Lisa Overdrive*, cyberpunk has followed the paradigm of a literary sensation with almost textbook precision. Within a month of its release, *Neuromancer* was a word-of-mouth bestseller; within a year it was the biggest thing in science fiction, the only winner ever of all three major science fiction awards, the Hugo, the Nebula and the Philip K. Dick.

Mirrorshades and manifestoes: But unlike other award-winning science fiction novels, *Neuromancer* spawned a movement, made up at first of a circle of authors who were already friends: Gibson, Bruce Sterling, Lewis Shiner and John Shirley. Though Gibson was, and remains, the movement's most important writer, it was Sterling who elected himself spokesman, becoming almost better known for his manifestoes (the introductions to *Mirrorshades: The Cyberpunk Anthology* and Gibson's book of short stories, *Burning Chrome*) than for his own novels (*Schismatrix*, *Islands in the Net*).

Next thing you know, cyberpunk spawned two discourses, both of which are necessary to a literary movement: a search for roots and tradition, and a lively controversy over the merits of cyberpunk itself. Some of the traditionmongering was just plain goofy; the debate over who wrote the first cyberpunk novel—John Shirley? Rudy Rucker? Norman Spinrad?—was as convoluted and arcane as the paleontological search for the first hominid. On the other hand, the search for ancestors illuminated some interesting parallels.

Not only do the cyberpunks cite Philip K. Dick and J.G. Ballard as precursors, but also such mainstream literary figures as Thomas Pynchon, Don DeLillo and Robert Stone, as well as such equivocal figures—are they literary or popular?—as John le Carré and Raymond Chandler. In addition, cyberpunk aficionados claim such films as *Blade Runner*, both *Aliens* and *RoboCop*, and have declared solidarity with such combinations of the street and the commercial as rock videos, Max Headroom and hip-hop.

Which led finally to a raging controversy in science fiction. Some of the old guard, especially those who had been members of the '60s science fiction new wave (Ballard, Brian Aldiss, Michael Moorcock) fondly saw their own youth in cyberpunk, while the current generation of traditional science fiction writers (Gregory Benford, David Brin) are pretty cynical about it, seeing the movement as a shrewd marketing strategy and nothing more. What is *Neuromancer*, they say, but *The Big Sleep* with computer graphics? And by now the academic critics have weighed in with a special cyberpunk issue of the *Mississippi Review* that features a long interview with Gibson and some fascinating essays (especially those by Brooks Landon and Istvan Csicsery-Ronay). But no living writer, especially no living writer of popular fiction, wants to be written about by post-structuralists.

Next big thing: Up to a point, cyberpunk's critics are right. Whether it is a legitimate aesthetic or not, it certainly works well as a marketing strategy. Cyberpunk has been touted as the Next Big Thing by *Rolling Stone*, and cyberpunk stories are regularly featured in Bob Guccione's slick *Omni* magazine. Gibson is doing all right, as lean and

hungry revolutionaries go: his story "New Rose Hotel" is being turned into a film, *Neuromancer* is one of the hottest properties in Hollywood right now, and he is currently writing the screen play for *Aliens 3*.

Yet criticisms of cyberpunk go beyond jealousy of the movement's success to more substantive criticisms. One that the cyberpunks have not yet satisfactorily addressed is

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that cyberpunk is an exclusively male phenomenon (with the sole exception so far of Pat Cadigan). There are some mighty tough women characters in cyberpunk, typically hard-boiled female assassins fitted with nasty prosthetic killing devices, but they owe more to the tough but vulnerable heroines of filmmaker Howard Hawks than to the genuinely feminist heroines of such women science fiction writers as Joanna

Cyberpunk stories are set in a frightening milieu of urban decay and corporate hegemony.

Russ and C.J. Cherryh. For all their druggy fascination with the nature of identity, the cyberpunks seem reluctant to deal in any radical way with sexuality.

Another problem is what *Mississippi Review* essayist Csicsery-Ronay has called the cyberpunks' "bad faith," namely their gloomy world-view and fascination with sleaze ("neuromanticism," Csicsery-Ronay calls it). The cyberpunk world

is one in which government and politics hardly matter anymore, in which monolithic corporations battle each other like feudal states. Indeed, the decadence of corporate fantasies is matched only by the brutality of life at street level in the vast cities of cyberpunk's future.

A literary shrug: Despite the fact that this science fiction milieu mirrors Reagan's America, with its merging corporate giants at one end and its crack houses and drive-by shootings at the other, there is no polemical point being made here. Cyberpunk is not a dystopian fiction. While Orwell's *1984* was an angry warning, cyberpunk is more of a shrug. Dystopia is already here, say the cyberpunks and we might as well get used to it. For all the energy of its sex'n'drugs'n'rock 'n'roll, cyberpunk at its worst comes perilously close to the curdled romanticism of the sensitive adolescent.

Part of this, though, is the result of cyberpunk's overreliance on old film noir plots, on the Chanderlesque notion of a cynical white knight going up against the big boys. In his *Mississippi Review* interview, Gibson confesses that in writing *Neuromancer* he fell back on film noir out of inexperience, as a kind of safety net for a beginning novelist. But what Gibson found fascinating about writing *Neuromancer* was the specificity of detail in creating its world. Which is, indeed, the greatest strength of the best cyberpunk, especially Gibson's work, the creation of a dazzlingly complex and disturbingly plausible world of sights and sounds and smells, a purely literary creation that puts *Blade Runner* and *RoboCop* in the shade.

In a way, it's a cheap shot to fault cyberpunk—and Gibson in particular—for its plots. Nobody faults Dickens for his, creaky and melodra-

matic as they are, and the pleasure in reading both Dickens and Gibson comes from a similar sprawling, furiously energetic urban world of vivid, if not always rounded, characters from every strata of society. And while Gibson and the cyberpunks lack Dickens' passion for social justice, at least they depict the cultural and economic power of corporations in an honest and unblinkered way, a subject largely ignored by their mainstream contemporaries.

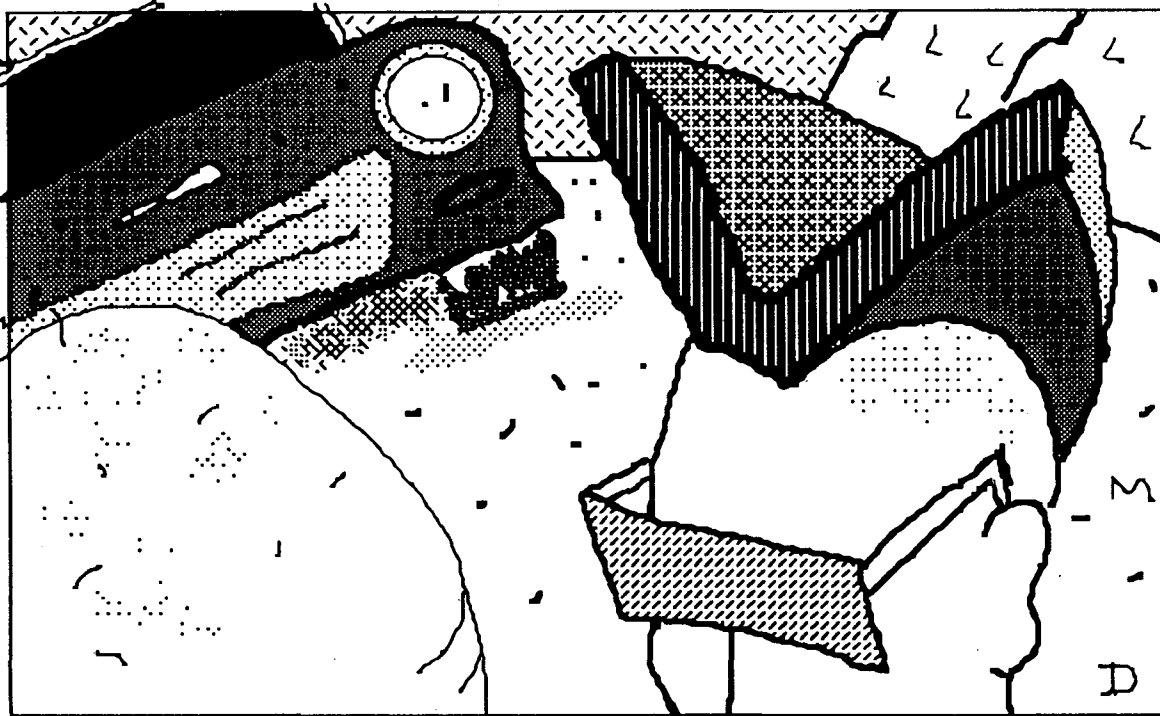
While admitting the corporate dominance of mass communication and information transfer, Gibson *et al.* see at least a potential for liberation in the new technologies, which could put access to information and a means of expression in the hands of nearly everybody. Whatever the corporate intent of the personal computer, the camcorder and the Walkman, "the street," says Gibson, "finds it owns uses for things."

One step beyond: Gibson himself seems about ready to push beyond cyberpunk. His latest novel, *Mona Lisa Overdrive*, has the feeling of a farewell performance. The third in a trilogy of novels, starting with *Neuromancer*, followed by *Count Zero* (1986), *Mona Lisa Overdrive* is set 15 years after the events of *Neuromancer* and features some return performances.

The Hawksian razorgirl of *Neuromancer*, Molly, returns, calling herself Sally now, and the young lovers of *Count Zero*, Bobby and Angela, reappear; Bobby is now a computer cowboy the equal of *Neuromancer's* Case, and Angela is Sense/Net's premier simstim (simulated stimulus) star, a pop idol whose physical sensations are recorded for the vicarious pleasure of the public. As always, Gibson's prose is taut and clean and evocative, and as usual, the plot is byzantine in the extreme, making *The Big Sleep* look like a campfire story by comparison. There is the usual corporate guerrilla warfare, complicated by the interference of street hustlers out to score—all of it retailed at a breakneck speed.

As with the earlier novels, none of the plot really sticks to your ribs. In *Mona Lisa Overdrive*, as in all of cyberpunk, speed and detail are everything. It is at heart a philosophical novel, albeit one with enough action to shame *Mad Max*. It's a novel of ideas in which the plot is a mere frame, the ideas embedded in the language itself, instead of spouted whole by the characters (as in such traditional novels of ideas as those by Saul Bellow or Milan Kundera). In this case, God is in the details, in the blizzard of science fiction devices, slang and brand names Gibson hurls at us without explanation, creating a world in which the currency of power is no longer money but information.

New-age monster: Buried beneath the surface detail and plot is another, deeper story that runs through all three books, and pro-



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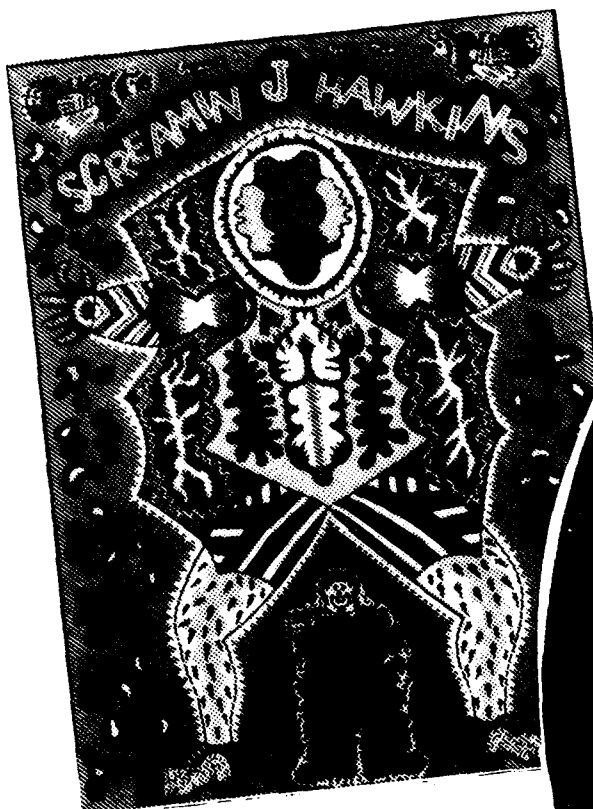
vides their metaphorical foundation: the struggle of artificial intelligence to assert its own power and autonomy against its creators. If you're tempted to write this off as another gloss on *Frankenstein*, remember that *Frankenstein* itself was a powerful romantic allegory for the Industrial Revolution, with the monster representing the vast physical force at the disposal of mere mortals.

But Gibson's novels do more than bring the Frankenstein myth into the computer age; there is more to this than computers taking over. Gibson's understanding of the effect of the new information technologies is more subtle: if the simple innovation of movable type irrevocably changed our culture and consciousness, imagine what the personal computer and instant satellite communications will do. This incipient revolution in consciousness is powerfully symbolized in *Mona Lisa Overdrive*; much of Gibson's understanding of who the players are in this new industrial revolution is light-years more complex than most science fiction, let alone Mary Shelley. The scientists who create the new machines are only hired guns; the real power is corporate. The enigmatic conclusion of *Mona Lisa Overdrive* suggests not only that Gibson is ready to move beyond cyberpunk, but that there are more surprises in store.

Now that the literary mainstream has grudgingly admitted such writers as Elmore Leonard and John le Carré, Gibson may become the first real breakthrough author in science fiction history, the first to gain a mainstream reputation on the basis of his writing alone. But that misses the point: in the end, Gibson is first and foremost a science fiction writer, and a great one at that. And what great science fiction writers have always done, which most contemporary mainstream writers do not, is confront the moral and cultural implications of technological and social change. Perhaps Gibson and the other cyberpunks' main impact, as the "literary quality" of their prose brings them mainstream converts, will be the damage they do to such distinctions as that between "literary" and "popular" literature.

Coming from a genre tradition, Gibson is working some of the same territory as such mainstream writers as Madison Smartt Bell and Steve Erickson. So perhaps the point after all is not that Gibson is a mainstream writer in disguise, or that Bell really writes science fiction, but that all of them are busting genre boundaries in the interest of an American fiction that is no longer constrained to the solipsism of modernism or the resigned narcissism of the minimalists, a lively, outrageous and, above all, intellectually challenging fiction that is unafraid of ideas, a fiction that, like the great novels of the first Industrial Revolution, depicts the way we live now.

James Hynes is a teaching-writing fellow at the Iowa Writers' Workshop.



Art-rock cross-overs: above, *Screamin' Jay Hawkins* by Karl Wirsum, *God Save the Queen* by Jamie Reid.

Rock and the art of assimilation

Cross-Overs: Art into Pop, Pop into Art

By John A. Walker
Methuen, 169 pp., \$15.95

By Victor Margolin

THE TERM "CROSS-OVER," AS BRITISH art and design historian John Walker defines it, is the cross-fertilization that occurs between different arts, media, genres, styles and subcultures. Walker argues in this provocative book that '80s culture is characterized by such cross-overs that bypass the conventional boundaries of high and popular art, avant-garde and establishment, and distinct media such as painting, music, graphic design and theater.

His focus is the relation between high art and pop music in the past 30 years. For Walker, the adoption of high art imagery and aspirations by pop musicians is of greater consequence than the use of imagery from pop music in artworks destined for the gallery and museum. Perhaps the most important moment for high art's borrowing from pop music was in the early '60s when artists such as Peter Blake in England and Andy Warhol in the U.S. incorporated images of pop music stars in their paintings. But that borrowing remained within the high art context and failed to move painting from museums and galleries into more popular venues.

Surreal estate: On the other hand, high art has had a major im-

pact on pop music. Whereas a musician or pop group 30 years ago would have been content with flashy outfits, a few stage moves and a flattering album-cover photo, musicians today recognize their image as part of their musical identity that must be as dramatic and carefully crafted as their music, if not more so. In many instances, as Walker demonstrates, high art has provided the stimulus for these image designs. Early surrealist films by Buñuel and Dali such as *L'Age d'Or* and *Un Chien Andalou* have become models for

POP ART

the stream of consciousness imagery of rock videos, while groups like Cabaret Voltaire were highly conscious of the Italian futurists' experiments with sound as they produced their own experimental recordings.

Walker focuses primarily on Britain, where the cross-over from high art to pop music is more extensive than in the U.S. because of the close connection between the British art schools and the pop music scene. Musicians such as Adam Ant, Jeff Beck, Eric Burdon, Ian Drury, Brian Eno, the late John Lennon, Malcolm McLaren and Keith Richards all attended art school before going into pop music. During the heyday of the British art school in the '60s, many of the students were from working-class backgrounds, and some went into pop music because it seemed to offer a better chance to make a living.

In the '60s bands like the Beatles, the Who, Pink Floyd and the Bonzo Dog Band established a precedent for others to follow. They were highly conscious of their visual impact—not only through their stage costumes, but also through album covers, performance spectacles and films.

Bands and their music became a rallying point for graphic artists, stage designers, film and video directors, photographers and fashion designers. Walker cites numerous examples: David Montgomery's photographs for the Who, Roger Dean's extraordinary stage productions for the rock group Yes, Peter Blake's album covers for the Beatles, Andy Warhol's for the Rolling Stones and Malcolm McLaren's makeover of the New York Dolls and his image design for the Sex Pistols.

Avant-garde movements such as futurism, dada, constructivism and surrealism all became grist for the pop music image mill. By meticulously documenting the close con-

Avant-garde movements such as futurism, dada and surrealism all became grist for the pop music image mill.

nection between avant-garde movements and the album covers, costumes and musical forms of some rock groups, Walker makes a good case for pop music as a viable medium for the continuation of radical political statements expressed in provocative artistic forms.

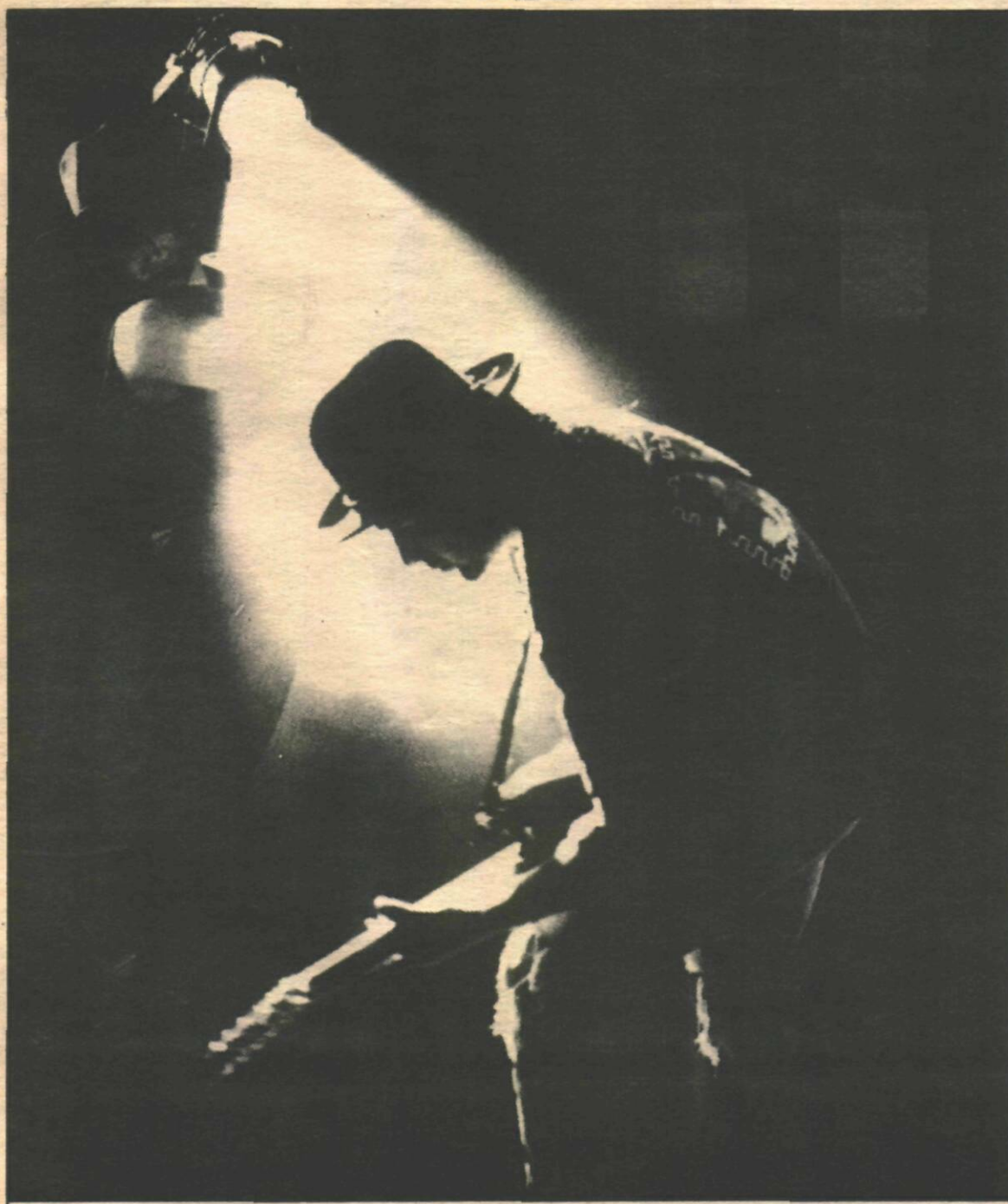
The flip side of pop music's self-conscious relation to high art sources, as Walker sees it, is the tendency to regard all imagery as consumable, which, he says, will likely lead to a burnout of the whole pop music industry. Noting the increasing tendency of pop groups to manipulate their images, Walker writes: "Whereas in the 1950s photographers recorded stars, groups and performances in a straightforward documentary fashion, their counterparts in the 1980s are part of a sophisticated fantasy fabrication. Pop photography, like pop music, has become much more complex, self-conscious and artificial."

All-consuming images: While the growing complexity of pop music and its imagery helps justify its aspirations for a higher artistic status, its self-consciousness and espousal of artificiality reflect the assertions of art and social critics such as Jean Baudrillard that we live increasingly in a world of simulacra that have no meaning behind them. If the image of a rock group is infinitely transformable and the entire visual world is a source for borrowing and appropriating, how do we then regard such images as meaningful statements rather than part of a constantly changing visual spectacle? This issue, of course, is not exclusive to pop music but is central to current criticism in art, architecture, design, film and literature.

Walker nonetheless believes in pop music as an art. As he shows, it is a medium that provides a creative outlet for some of the most intelligent artists working today. To support his arguments, he offers us a veritable encyclopedia of examples that includes case studies of various collaborations between visual artists and pop musicians: Andy Warhol and the Velvet Underground; Yoko Ono and John Lennon; and caricaturist Gerald Scarfe's cartoon work for Pink Floyd's extravaganza, *The Wall*.

The author describes an energetic pop music culture sustained by continual invention and a voracious appetite to consume images from high art and elsewhere. He makes a strong case for the serious study of pop music as a cultural phenomenon and shows how much more easily it absorbs influences from high art than art does from pop music. Walker only hints at the reasons for this, but he raises questions that can help us reorient ourselves to our society's most dynamic centers of cultural transformation.

Victor Margolin teaches in the history of architecture and art department at the University of Illinois at Chicago.



U2's Bono and The Edge light up the stage in *Rattle and Hum*.

Carved in rock: U2's Mount Rushmore moves

U2: Rattle and Hum
Directed by Phil Joanou

By Danny Duncan Collum

IN THE OPENING SECONDS OF THE ROCK group U2's concert-tour documentary *Rattle and Hum*, we hear lead singer Bono proclaim, "This is a song Charles Manson stole from The Beatles. We're stealin' it back." Then the band launches into a ferocious version of "Helter Skelter." It's an appropriate opening salvo from a band that in recent years has seemed to be on a mission to "steal back" rock'n'roll's legacy of idealism from the deadly forces of self-indulgence, squalor and commerce.

U2 didn't begin as worshipers at the throne of rock tradition. They began as true sons of '77, four pals from Dublin who heard the Sex Pistols and decided that they too could be a rock'n'roll band. Bono

has said that when the group began, his record collection started not with the Beatles, or even Led Zep, but with Patti Smith's 1975 album, *Horses*.

Droning atmosphere: The boys went a long way learning their instruments in public and making a noise of their own. The rock-crit adjective most often applied to that noise was "atmospheric." This is a tribute to the Celtic drones floating from guitarist The Edge. Bono's lyrics were "atmospheric" too, which was often a euphemism for impenetrable vagueness. He has said that most of his early lyrics were attempts to communicate the incommunicable. More often than not the incommunicable element in U2's songs was the spiritual quest, a search which saw three of the band's four members (Bono, The Edge and drummer Larry Mullen) become devout, though non-denominational, Christians.

On the 1982 album *War*, the band toughened its sound and tightened

its song structures. Meanwhile Bono's spirituality had matured to a point where it could find its focus in the material world. The result was a hard-rock album with memorable hooks and hummable choruses that also packed a wallop of moral outrage at their native Ireland's endless wars, at the banning of Solidarity's promise, and especially at the then-imminent arrival

U2 didn't begin as worshipers at the throne of rock tradition. They began as true sons of '77 who heard the Sex Pistols and decided that they, too, could be a band.

of America's Euromissiles.

On the strength of this music U-2 found its first mass success. The band crossed the line from college radio to AOR and from new wave clubs to arenas. They headlined the 1986 Amnesty International tour and stole the show at every stop. With *The Joshua Tree* they made the final breakthrough from rock success to pop-culture icons. The album sold 13 million copies, and this time when they toured America they played football stadiums.

Rattle and Hum, the movie and the accompanying double album,

MUSIC

documents that tour. On one obvious level, the concert movie and double-album career move would seem to be the group's crowning gesture of ambition—an attempt to carve their own faces on rock'n'roll's Mount Rushmore. And there is a bit of that in the movie's full-page newspaper ads with the name of the band set in monumental type and a small print kicker promising special, limited edition U2 merchandise (hats, T-shirts, etc.) on sale at a theater near you.

Economy of scale: U2 has never made any secret of its longing for mass success. The band is from the populist rock school that considers the broadest possible communication as a measure of artistic achievement. But on the populist rock scale, mass acceptance and celebrity is only successful if the artist wins it on his or her own terms and uses it to confound convention and afflict the culturally or materially comfortable. Anything else is seen as anti-rock showbiz.

So far U2 has managed its mega-celebrity moves with admirable rock'n'roll style. But their move for the mainstream does carry its inevitable ambiguities and risks. For a while there, it seemed that no one in rock history had done a better job of using fame constructively than Bruce Springsteen. But this summer the star-making machinery turned on him. Now he's just that guy in *People* magazine who left his wife for his backup singer. Refusing to ride the publicity tiger can be self-marginalizing, and sometimes smugly elitist. But the beast does get hungry.

U2 maintained their independence on the *Rattle and Hum* project by financing the movie themselves. They hired the director (Phil Joanou) and set the ground rules (i.e., no filming their families, no stock hotel room and limo stuff). Most of the movie was shot in black and white to avoid the use of lighting equipment that would hamper spontaneity on the road and interfere with the concert performances.

Rattle and Hum's in-concert sequences will only amplify U2's reputation as one of rock's great

live acts. Their years together have given them a collective sixth sense that makes them something much bigger than the sum of their parts. The communal utopianism of their lyrics finds flesh in the cooperative communalism of the group. At one point, while the band plays an intro, the camera catches Bono swaying at the mike stand and smiling to himself in appreciation of the heavenly storm his mates are kicking up. For that stolen moment, the star is a fan again.

The wild and the insolent: The performances also capture the band's increasingly political thrust, and their self-consciousness about their political role. In the middle of "Silver and Gold," (Bono's contribution to the *Sun City* album) the singer breaks into a rap about economic sanctions against South Africa. Perhaps sensing the audience's discomfort, he asks with true rock'n'roll insolence, "Am I bugging you? I don't mean to bug you." On "Bullet the Blue Sky," the references to El Salvador are made painfully specific. The band also gets in its two cents worth on the Irish question, doling out equal condemnation to IRA terror and H-block torture.

The offstage footage is less successful. The camera follows the band up to Harlem, where they hear a street musician singing "Freedom For My People" and play their own question spiritual, "I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For," with a black gospel choir. Later they play a new Memphis-soul-derived composition, "Angel of Harlem," at the original Sun Studio where Elvis changed the world, and take a tour of Graceland. In Texas they are joined onstage by B.B. King for "When Love Comes to Town," a song they wrote especially for the blues legend.

If you happen to be among U2's co-religionists (in The Church of Rock, that is) then these snatches add up to a symbolic story, or better still, the evocation of a larger Story. If you can read the signs you know that what we're witnessing is U2 assimilating, and assuming, the mantle of the rock and roll tradition. Another Mount Rushmore move, no doubt about it. But one taken with appropriate humility.

Unfortunately, to the uninitiated this potentially grand story is just a jumble. The band or director Joanou are to blame for that. Despite the fact that Bono, in print interviews, has shown himself to be the natural heir to the Lennon/Townshend chair of rock analysis, in this movie nobody ever condescends to explain, in words, why these side trips into mythic America are supposed to be important.

Danny Duncan Collum is a freelance writer living in Boston and a monthly columnist for *Sojourners* magazine.

Alien Nation

Directed by Graham Baker

They Live

Directed by John Carpenter

By Jim Naureckas

Alien consumer overkill and race, the final frontier

THEY ARE AMONG US, QUIETLY INVADING urban entertainment centers and suburban multiplexes—political allegories disguised as science fiction.

This species has materialized before, of course, but this fall movie season is notable for two films that use the same motif—the alien invaders—to carry very different messages.

The first is *Alien Nation*, whose premise is that hundreds of thousands of aliens crash-land on Earth and are assimilated into society. These Newcomers have large, mottled bald heads, eat raw meat and get drunk on sour milk. But more significantly, to humans they seem abnormally strong, very successful at school and work, overly clannish and sexually threatening.

Space race: In short, the Newcomers—known as “slags” to the many who despise them—exhibit features that white Americans stereotypically attribute to various ethnic groups. *Alien Nation* uses extraterrestrials as stand-ins to raise the issue of contemporary race relations.

The plot is borrowed from the prototype of the modern buddy film, *In the Heat of the Night*—with a bigoted white cop (James Caan in *Alien Nation*) gradually becoming enlightened by being partners with an admirable minority member (Mandy Patinkin takes the Sidney Poitier role).

Alien Nation, however, bears an even more startling resemblance to one of the buddy genre's weirder mutations: *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*? In both movies, the minority figure is not human, and the human (white) guy's former partner was killed by someone of the same non-human race. The human is understandably resentful until the non-human redeems his kind by helping avenge the partner's death.

Many critics pointed out the racial symbolism in *Roger Rabbit*'s Toontown and the cartoon version of the Cotton Club. What could be dealt with openly 20 years ago now appears as fable.

Still, *Alien Nation* does offer some insight (as well as above-average shootouts and car chases). One subtext contrasts the humans' perception that the Newcomers are ignorant and naive about Earth society with the reality that, like most minorities, the aliens have a subtle and ironic understanding of the culture they live in. There's a scene in a “Slagtown” bar where the music blaring is David Bowie's “Scary Monsters”—something some Newcomers obviously get a kick out of being.

Swirling sexuality: In another scene, a Newcomer exotic dancer attempts to seduce the James Caan

character. “Doesn't the curiosity and the fear all swirling around turn you on?” the dancer asks Caan, drawing a link between race and sexuality. But as in the similar Bob Hoskins/Jessica Rabbit scene in *Roger Rabbit*, the inter-species relationship is never consummated.

The racial references in *Alien Nation* are almost always to a stereotype of superiority rather than inferiority. The overt, literal message of the film seems to be that Newcomers are superior in many ways. This may reflect a shift in the race problem from whites trying to keep other races “in their place” to worry that soon whites may be losing their own place in a shifting global economy.

The use of aliens as symbols of ethnic groups is so fraught with pitfalls that it isn't surprising that the

film eventually stumbles. Without giving away the surprise, it turns out that the Newcomers are in some ways really scary, and it involves drugs and violent crime. In the year of George Bush, that particular reference turns as sour as Newcomer milk faster than you can say “Willie Horton.”

In general, however, *Alien Nation* is a wholesome, if not terribly courageous, liberal parable. In these respects it is wholly unlike *They Live*, another aliens-among-us movie that is an audacious, not entirely wholesome, left-of-liberal attack on the American way of life.

In *They Live* the aliens have invaded secretly, replacing or recruiting the ruling class, and are using advertising, mass media and commodities to brainwash the public

into becoming docile consumers.

If you've read *In These Times* at all during the past eight years, this probably sounds very familiar. But even fans of Alex Cockburn may be surprised by the strength of *They Live*'s anti-capitalist diatribes, delivered by the film's most sympathetic character. No Hollywood film in recent memory has yet suggested that

Aliens have secretly invaded and are using advertising and mass media to brainwash the public.

food-stamp cutbacks, bank failures, layoffs and pollution are all caused by a sinister ruling elite.

Reproduce and consume: Wearing special glasses that enable one to see the reality beneath hypnotically induced illusions, the film's hero discovers that we are surrounded by subliminal messages urging us to “CONFORM,” “MARRY AND REPRODUCE,” “WATCH TV.” He even finds that Dan Quayle is one of THEM, a horrible monster mouthing “morning in America” clichés while standing in front of a campaign poster that says only “OBEY.”

They Live is the creation of premier horror director John Carpenter (*Halloween* and the remake of *The Thing*). In recent years Carpenter has dissociated himself from major studio production, preferring to make low-budget films over which he has complete control over. The result this time is something more blatantly radical than anything John Sayles or Haskell Wexler has ever done.

The filmmaker Carpenter seems most inspired by, in fact, is Jean-Luc Godard. (Carpenter's last film, *Prince of Darkness*, was set in a spooky church named “St. Godard's.”) Like Godard's *Weekend*, *They Live* alternates between polemic attack and cathartic violence.

In fairness, Carpenter is probably equally influenced by pro wrestling, where he discovered his star, “Rowdy” Roddy Piper. Piper, who comes across as a combination of Kurt Russell and Bill Murray, is probably responsible for a long and pointless alley fight scene and such lines as “I have come here to chew bubblegum and kick ass, and I'm all out of bubblegum.”

Whatever the inspiration, the random mayhem does reflect the torpor of left theory circa 1988. Piper ends up shooting cops and machine-gunning alien yuppies in banks because, like postmodern socialists, he can't think of any way to counter a hegemonic elite that controls all forms of mass communication. The underground resistance in *They Live* does manage to “shut off the signal” by destroying the alien transformer, but this provides no more practical an answer than Spike Lee's call to “wake up” at the end of *School Daze*.

Because Carpenter, like everyone else, has little to offer in the way of solutions, the movie eventually becomes rather thin. (As in *Robocop*, a sort of cousin to *They Live*, the most interesting stuff happens in the margins.) The satire gives way to left-wing Ramboism, which gets boring quickly. Carpenter, however, is clever enough to anticipate that criticism: one of the final scenes is obviously meant to portray TV movie critics Roger Ebert and Gene Siskel complaining about sex and violence in Carpenter's films. Siskel and Ebert, of course, are ghoulish space creatures, and they sit in front of a logo that reads “NO INDEPENDENT THOUGHT.”

Jim Naureckas is a former staff writer for *In These Times*.



James Caan and Mandy Patinkin in *Alien Nation* (top); Roddy Piper and Keith David in *They Live* (bottom).

Silent summer

Continued from page 13

iodine-131—2,400 picocuries per liter—was recorded in Portland on May 9. Interestingly, no cesium-137 was detected, even though such exceeding high levels of iodine-131 were present in the rainwater.

This was typical of the 18 days of EPA monitoring, in which cesium-137 was detected in very minute quantities on only six occasions. Thus cesium-137 was not "ubiquitous" during the Chernobyl fallout in the U.S., but was instead practically nonexistent. Apparently iodine-131 can fall from the sky without cesium under certain conditions.

Brisbin cited high-level radiation experiments conducted by SREL—in which baby bluebirds were irradiated with 900 rads—as additional proof that the low levels of radiation deposited by the Chernobyl cloud could not have caused the reproductive failures of the West Coast birds.

"We're talking about the kind of radiation that caused the heroic firemen at Chernobyl to lose all of their hair, and they got bloody diarrhea and died," he said. "And these little bluebirds took it and lived. The only thing that happened, interesting enough, is it stunted their wing feathers. Their behavior was intact, but they fell like rocks. If brought into the laboratory they were perfectly happy birds, but ecologically they were dead pigeons because they could only walk."

Dropping from the sky like a rock is one way to become a mortality statistic, but other birds may not require such huge radiation dosages to be adversely affected, according to DeSante.

"They blasted the birds with hundreds of rads, and so those birds got stunted wings," DeSante said. "They extrapolated these effects down, and showed that at low-dose rates there should be no effect."

Low-level hazards: But 16 years ago studies conducted by radiation biologist Abram Petkau for the Canadian Atomic Research Laboratories demonstrated that just the opposite is true. Taking a small amount of radioactive sodium-22, Petkau added it to water that contained model lipid membranes extracted from fresh beef brain. The astonishing result was that the membranes burst at only one rad when the dosage was given over a long period of time.

Conversely, Petkau found that 3,500 rads were required to break the cell membrane when applied in a short period over several minutes. This discovery—that chronic low levels of radiation are potentially more harmful than brief, high-dose exposures—has been corroborated by many scientists from the U.S., Canada and Europe. A July 1986 study published in *The Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* demonstrated that very low levels of radiation, such as that produced by fallout, are 200 times more efficient at producing mutations than the conventional method of using high dose-rates, or brief bursts from x-ray machines. The researchers wrote that "these data may have important implications for human health."

DeSante theorizes that immune system problems, or other unknown effects from low-level radiation, may have hindered young birds' survival chances and even killed recently hatched birds. Further, Brisbin's comparisons between crippled but captive

bluebirds and wild birds that must be healthy enough to survive thousands of miles of migratory hardship appear incongruous. Even small changes in weight, general health and wing length could drastically reduce a young bird's chances of survival, particularly if it is a long-distance migrant. It is well documented that in the case of mammals, infants are about 10 times more sensitive to radiation than adults, and fetuses about 20 times more sensitive. It is possible that infant birds are even more sensitive to radiation than infant mammals.

SREL routinely conducts studies on resident ducks that have been repeatedly contaminated by radioactive emissions from the Savannah nuclear plants. Brisbin said, "These ducks are flying off after being contaminated with 200 picocuries of radiation," and "there is no problem with eating them as food."

"That's at least 2,000 times greater than those birds on the West Coast received," he said. "Now if you want to study low-level radiation effects, let's work with these birds. If the ducks out here were radioactive, you better believe we will say it. I am an employee of the University of Georgia, and I report to no one but my laboratory director, who is also a faculty member of the University of Georgia, and there is absolutely no censorship of our laboratory by the Department of Energy, which supports this work."

But according to DeSante, one cannot compare the effects of radiation on SREL ducks with "tiny critters like chickadees, which may weigh only a third of an ounce."

"No other animals would be as sensitive to radiation as those baby birds during their first 10 days of development," he said. "Studies have also been done on chickens. They are very different because they hatch fully feathered and are able to run around right away. They have a long development time in the egg. They are much larger and heavier. So people haven't worked with low levels of radiation with little birds. That is what needs to be done now."

Early warning? Warnings about the danger of pesticides came through loud and clear in the '50s, when the Peregrine Falcon and Bald Eagle showed signs of becoming

extinct because of exposure to the pesticide DDT, which was eventually banned. The implications of DDT exposure were grim: the pesticide might have a similar effect on humans.

In a manner similar to iodine-131, DDT tends to accumulate in the thyroid and other organs that contain fatty substances and becomes more concentrated as it moves through the various stages of the food web.

Just as this phenomenon was not understood or was deliberately ignored by the pesticide "experts" 40 years ago, such ever-increasing accumulations in the food web are not publicly acknowledged today, when government regulatory agencies and Energy Department officials assure the public that low levels of radiation routinely released from nuclear power plants and underground nuclear testing are harmless. Moreover, large-scale atmospheric nuclear tests conducted by the superpowers in the '50s may have contributed to the problems birds were having in those days as well, in light of the circumstantial evidence that Chernobyl may be implicated in the unprecedented landbird failure in the summer of 1986.

Ornithologists generally agree that birds can be regarded as early warning systems for humans because they are extremely sensitive to the environment—like the canary in the coal mine. The miners never knew when poisonous gases were accumulating to dangerous levels. When the canary died, the miners got out. Did birds send a similar message to humanity in the summer of 1986—this time about the dangers of low-level radiation?

Undeterred by the expert criticism leveled at his studies, DeSante recently resigned from PRBO and is now independently analyzing the 1986-87 Breeding Bird Survey data collected by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Canadian Wildlife Service throughout all of continental North America. He hopes to determine if other areas besides the West Coast that received Chernobyl fallout also showed lower bird productivity.

"It is critically important that these studies be done," DeSante said. "There is no way that anyone would have detected what happened here on the West Coast if they weren't monitoring the production of young birds in a standardized manner for many years."

Kate Millpointer is an investigative journalist. Preston J. Truman is director of Downwinders, a Utah-based, public-watchdog environmental research group. Research was supported by a grant from the Fund for Investigative Journalism. Sarah Shannon, author of *Diet for the Atomic Age*, also contributed to the story.

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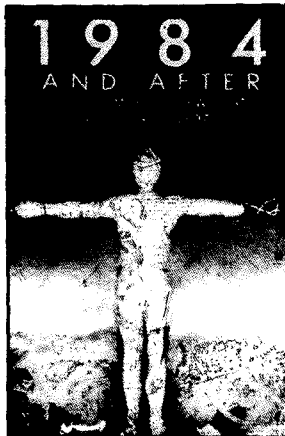
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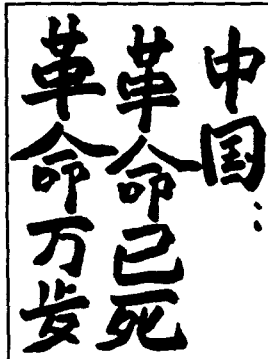
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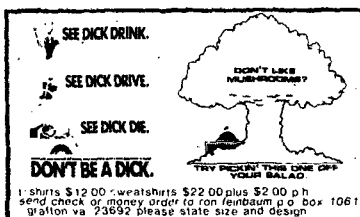
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C A L E N D A R

Use the Calendar to announce conferences, lectures, films, events, etc. The cost is **\$20.00 for one insertion, \$30.00 for two insertions and \$15.00 for each additional insert,** for copy of 50 words or less (additional words are 50¢ each). Payment must accompany your announcement, and should be sent to the attention of **ITT Calendar.**

Susan Jennik (AUD), Cynthia Long (Electricians), others, including educators, public employees, carpenters, hospital workers, etc. 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 3, 330 W. 42nd St., \$10 registration. For information, call Association for Union Democracy, (718) 855-6650.

NEW YORK CITY

December 1

The 1988 Elections: Lessons for the Future—A forum and discussion with Vicki Alexander (Line of March), Shakoor Aljwani (Democratic Socialists of America Afro-American Commission), Leslie Cagan (National Committee for Independent Political Action), and Bill Ryan (the Guardian). Co-sponsored by the Guardian, LOM, NCIPA. 7:00 p.m., Casa de las Americas, 104 W. 14th St., Manhattan. \$4 donation/\$2 unemployed.

NEW YORK CITY

December 3

"Women in Unions: Rights and Realities," strengthening working women's participation in, and control of, their unions. Speakers: Margarita Aguilar (NYU Clericals), Ida Torres (RWDSU).

NEW YORK CITY

December 18-20

A Network of Progressive Jewish Students will be formed at the TIKKUN Conference of Liberal/Progressive Jewish Intellectuals to discuss issues Jewish students face in social change organizations (e.g., distinguishing between anti-Semitism and legitimate criticism of Israel, Black/Jewish tensions, failure of the left to recognize Jewish oppression). Students will also attend the TIKKUN conference at the Penta Hotel. Speakers include: Michael Lerner, Irving Howe, Grace Paley, Marge Piercy, Victor Navasky, Arthur Waskow, Judy Chicago, Jessica Benjamin, Barney Frank, Todd Gitlin, Russell Jacoby, Paul Berman, Ellen Willis...and more. Special student admission: \$35. For more information call: (415) 482-0805. Send payment to: TIKKUN Conference, 5100 Leona St., Oakland, CA 94619.

LIFE IN HELL

LIFE IN HELL

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CHILDHOOD IS HELL

A CARTOON SERIES FOR YOU AND YOU AND YOU AND YOU AND YOU AND YOU

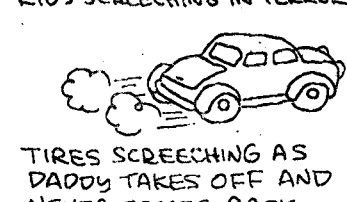
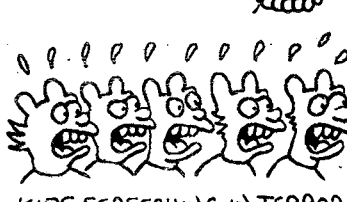
CHAPTER 17

D-I-V-O-R-C-E

YOU'RE JUST LIKE YOUR FATHER.



HOW TO TELL WHEN THERE'S A DIVORCE ON THE WAY



THE 12 STAGES OF DIVORCE FOR KIDS

1. DISBELIEF



2. DENIAL



3. FEAR



4. ANGER



5. BARGAINING



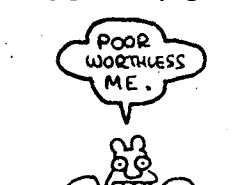
6. SHAME



7. DEPRESSION



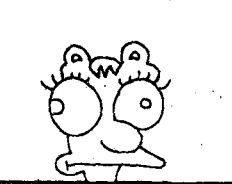
8. SELF-PITY



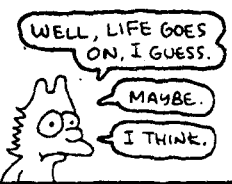
9. OUT-OF-BODY EXPERIENCE



10. EMPTY FEELING



11. LOOKING AHEAD



12. SECRET HOPE



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Subcontinental



Shafiq Syed and Chanda Sharma

calculates that the small crew lost a total of 200 pounds on the nine-week shoot. "When it was over," Nair said, "some of the crew members said, 'Working with you was murder, but when are you coming back?'"

The script was based on two months of documentary-style research. "What I learned from documentary," Nair said, "is that it captures the inexplicable, arbitrary nature of ordinary life. For instance, we met a kid who had burned his brother's scooter. He is terrified about it, and doesn't know even now why he did it. We wrote it into the script."

Real-life drama: And most importantly, they worked with the street kids themselves. The filmmakers began production with a seven-week improvisational workshop with street kids, many of whom then worked in the film. With theatrical exercises, dance, improvisations and discussions about their lives, the children practiced while educating the filmmakers. The energetic Shafiq quickly demonstrated a theatrical flair, and was chosen for the lead. The filmmakers faced more resistance in mounting the project from professional actors, such as the well-known Indian pro who played Baba, than they did the children.

"Since the film was inspired directly by the kids on the street, I never doubted that the kids themselves should play them," Nair said. "The kids' bodies reveal the passage to where they are."

Their debut is likely to be their final film performance, however. "People ask me what happened to the kids, and I have to say that they're still on the street—they never left it," said Nair. But the film company made provisions for them. Besides establishing a charitable organization to launch learning centers for Indian street kids, the film company paid the children several ways. The bulk of their money was put into a fixed-deposit account, to collect when they come of age. The rest, except for some spending money, was put into a savings account for them.

Shafiq, an extravagant and canny storyteller, boasted to the film company that when he came home with his cash, his father beat him up because he didn't believe he'd been in a movie. Nair is still trying to decide if it's true.

Now that the film has been successfully launched in the U.S., Nair is looking forward to its opening in India. The Indian government, which invested in the film, is charged with distributing it. There are few successful precedents for such a film in India, where audiences are fed a local entertainment film diet that makes Hollywood look sober.

Salaam Bombay! is an engrossing film, grounded in rich social reality. While it documents the stark poverty of the Bombay streets, and implicitly celebrates the ingenuity of the children who survive there, it creates characters as much drawn from fiction as from real life. It's not a film with a moral. "I am interested in revealing rather than preaching," said Nair. "It is more powerful. And besides, the street is no place for moralizing."

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Divide



By Pat Aufderheide

THE MOVIE SCREENS ARE CLOGGED with kids these days; it's the studios' way of getting baby boomers back into the movie houses. But *Salaam Bombay!* delivers kids of a different kind. These are street urchins in Bombay, whose daily life is pure pathos, seen from the outside, and pure bravado, seen from the inside. Filmmaker Mira Nair delivers both views, in a remarkable new film breaking nationally after a successful debut in New York.

Lodged somewhere in narrative tradition between *Oliver Twist* and *Pixote*, the film tells the story of tough but tender Krishna (Bombay street kid Shafiq Syed). Thrown out of his village home for burning his brother's motor scooter, he's a naïf who soon teams up with charming drug hustler Chillum (Raghubir Yadav). Chillum shows Krishna the ropes and introduces him to other child survivors of the street. Krishna gets a job delivering tea to whorehouses and tenements, where he meets winsome

little girl Manju (Hansa Vithal), as well as her violent pimp father Baba (Nana Patekar). Baba uses people like Chillum to distribute "brown sugar," an opium waste consumed like crack. While returning from servants' work one evening, Manju and Krishna are captured by police and sent to reformatories. Krishna escapes, but the street is another kind of prison.

In spite of everything that happens to him, Krishna never loses his generosity of spirit. And in spite of his generosity,

**Indian street kids
scrap for survival in
*Salaam Bombay!***

Krishna gets an even break. The film does not leave you depressed; it's not the *Los Olvidados* of India. We see inhumanity bred by an inhumane environment, but the character of Krishna remains optimistic. You can feel sorry for Krishna (an emotion it's not clear street kids themselves want to elicit), but he's a character who exemplifies hope in a hopeless situation.

Stranger than fiction: Director Mira Nair, an Indian trained at Harvard and a veteran

of several well-received independent documentaries (*So Far from India*, *India Cabaret*, *Children of a Desired Sex*), created the script with Sooni Taraporevala. Nair never intended *Salaam Bombay!* as a documentary of street life. "The film is utterly crafted, every moment," she told *In These Times*. "There's a clear plot, and it comes out of Sooni's imagination and my own." Still, Nair said that interviewers often ask her whether the film's hero ever did get back to his village, as if he were not a fictional character.

That's not altogether surprising, however, since Nair grounded the tale in documentary techniques. She was familiar with other similar films, especially the Brazilian *Pixote*. Nair said *Pixote* served primarily as inspiration to accomplish what Indian filmmakers told Nair would be impossible: to film on location. Her camera takes you matter-of-factly inside brothels, prisons and tea shops, and the screen fills with a wealth of detail that fascinates at least as much as the plot does. For example, when you see the outdoor encampment where Krishna sleeps, you realize that real children do sleep there on all the nights nobody's filming.

Not that location shooting was easy. Nair